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Note and plan to attend: CFTA Annual Meeting, Friday, April 6, 1979 at 12 Noon, Royal York Hotel,
Toronto, Ontario.

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Cover: Bob Kain sums up the CBC's biggest problem —How to win the loyalties of Canadians hooked on American TV?.

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Four of the articles in this issue deal with television. As the months go by, it is increasingly difficult to talk about film without recognizing the great importance which the television now wields. It reaches vast audiences and provides a huge potential market for Canadian films. We hope to continue publishing items dealing with TV and its relation to film. In issue no. 54, Joyce Nelson gives us a masterful study of world marketing of television programs and Michael Asti-Rose takes a look at television, by and for the kids, in Canada.

REVERB

Just the facts, please

I would like to clarify two points in Jane Dick's article "Powerhouse Presents" in the Nov./Dec. issue of Cinema Canada.

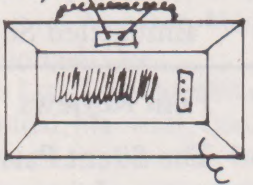
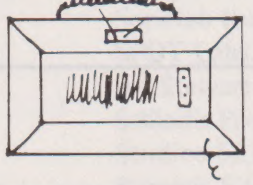
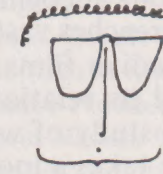
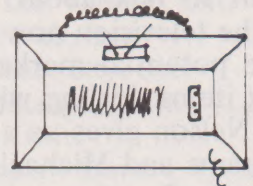
The Friday afternoon workshop held at the gallery in conjunction with the festival was concerned with 4 separate topics: documentaries (Bonnie Klein), feminist film criticism (Kay Armatage), the direct approach (Holly Dale and Janis Cole) and "are our films changing? —a look at an "early" feminist film (Barbara Steinman). The article noted that the workshop was to be concerned with "Feminist Film Criticism: The Direct Approach." It went on to say that Ardele Lister was present, when in fact it was Barbara Steinman, one of the members of the now defunct co-op Reel Feelings (not Reel Images) who was talking about the film "So Where's My Prince Already?"

Linda Covit
Co-ordinator

And get them straight!

Recently, you printed a review of our film Nikkolina in Cinema Canada.

Great Here

<i>I've been asked to become a 'Nielsen Family'.</i> 	<i>Along with 2000 others, I'd keep a weekly diary of my TV viewing, thus contributing to the computations of the ratings.</i> 	<i>They say each single ratings point is worth millions in advertising income for a network.</i> 
<i>For keeping this diary, I'd be paid 50 cents per week.</i> 	<i>At least it's a job in the media.</i> 	

by Joyce Nelson

Although we appreciate the magazine's interest in our work, we are puzzled at the rather obvious mistakes which have been made this time and in the past.

Some time ago a review of our film **Home Free** appeared with a photograph of the lady who played the grandmother, identifying her as her granddaughter. The review of the film **Another Kind of Music** reversed the names of the two leading characters. And, most recently, the title of our film and the name of the leading character were incorrectly spelled as "Nicolina", rather than "Nikkolina."

I suggest you advise your reviewers to be more careful in future.

Rebecca Yates

Thanks. Note is taken. Seldom do we, as the editors of Cinema Canada, receive printed —or even typewritten— material from the producers of short films, giving us the pertinent information about production data: names of the crew members, shooting dates, film stock, etc. Photos are seldom well identified either. In the final analysis, too often we have only the reviewer's information to go on. Cinema Canada invites you and all other producers of short films to supply us with publicity and information. It will help us do a better job, and will serve you well too. Thanks for your letter. Ed.

Errata

Our real thanks and apologies to Jane Dick who wrote the profiles on Lois Siegel and Lisa Langlois in the last issue. Her name was omitted as the author of the articles. It did, however, appear in error as a photographer; Jim Lawrence, in fact, took the photo of Siegel. And speaking of photos, John Williamson, unit photographer, should have been credited with the cover shot from **Fish Hawk**... Francine Dionne, producer of **Salut, J.M.** (working title: Est-ce une histoire d'amour?) phoned in the following corrections to Cinema Canada's production guide. Marcel Sabourin and not Michel Forget played in the film. Spelling errors were made in the following names? André Cailloux, Claire Pinparé and Alain Clavier. Our apologies to all concerned.

CANADIAN IMAGES

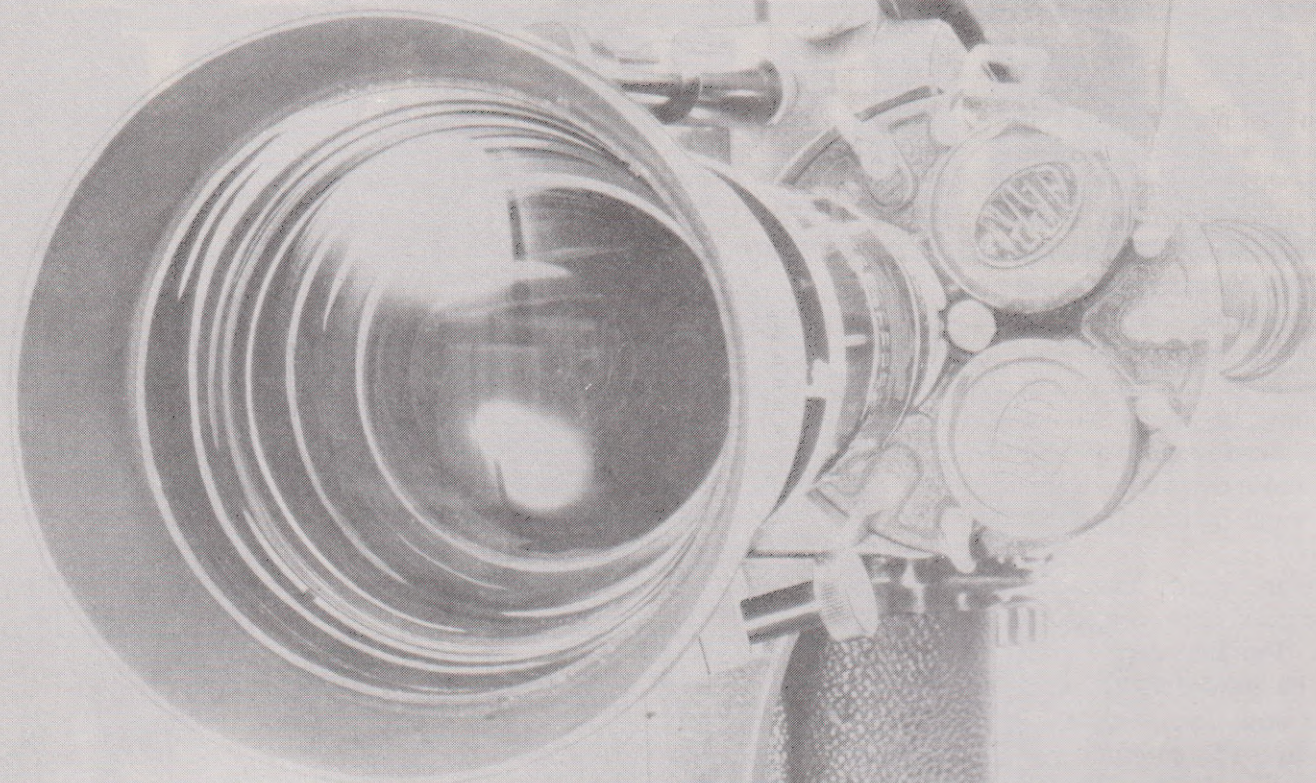
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INTRODUCING...

tony fletcher

tall actor

What roles can you play when you are 6'7" and have a voice that rumbles through the air like rolling thunder? Basketball players that double as disc jockeys? Frankenstein preaching from a pulpit? A white Watusi warrior who dreams of playing King Lear, maybe?

Tony Fletcher has had all the wise-cracks about his height he cares to experience, and now he wants to concentrate on the development of Tony Fletcher, actor and movie star, who just happens to be a tall person. Underline the word person.

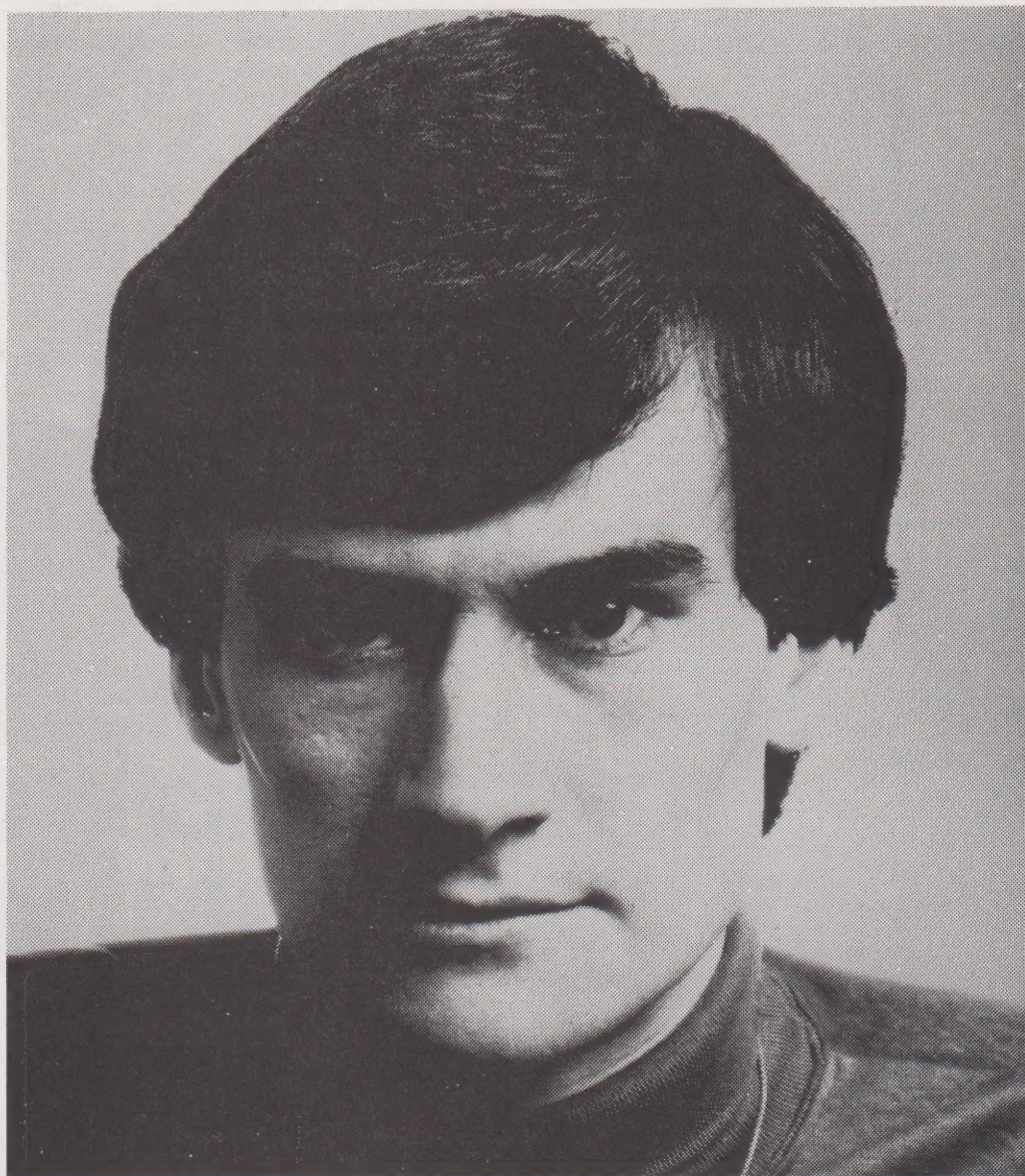
And underline the words movie star, because he has just been cast in the leading role of **The Intruder**, the latest picture to be produced by Hazelton Productions and directed by David Eustace. He plays *the* intruder, yes, who incidentally does happen to be a tall dark stranger with a powerful voice.

But that's not all he is, and that is what interests Tony most about him. "The character is a rather mysterious alien being, who could be from another planet — it's not important, but it's an interesting possibility — who comes to a corrupt town and tries to give the townspeople, by means of a sound and light show, the gift of self-actualization."

The subject of self-actualization fits in with Tony's basic philosophy very well. "Self-actualization is a kind of anti-materialism. It means being interested in a wider concept of life than just oneself. Getting pleasure from something like a spring day or the sound of a child laughing, rather than from a new car or the next promotion, and I can relate to that. It means finding life's real values.

"I am trying to give this fellow in the movie a certain depth to make him as interesting as possible — to find out what would make him the person he is, and to bring it all out on the screen."

This is Tony's first major starring role in a film. Until now he has appeared mostly on stage, in all the alternate



theatres of Toronto and has spent several seasons in Edmonton and Calgary where he got exposure on radio and television. He is particularly delighted to have played a tall Tweedle Dum to a short Tweedle Dee, à la Mutt and Jeff, in a version of "Alice in Wonderland" in Edmonton.

Tony is very confident about his transition from stage to film, and believes the experience in both mediums can only strengthen his technique in both.

"The presence one has to have on stage can only benefit your screen image, and the subtlety of film-acting can add greater depth to what you play on stage. An actor wins both ways."

Tony avoids actor ghettos and believes an actor's craft has much to profit by reaching out beyond the acting community. "I believe in getting to know and meet as many varied people as possible. I can't stand being bored and always grab the chance to learn something

Introducing

MICHELE LAUREN



PROFILE

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new. Some of my friends are executives, textile workers, real estate salesmen, not just actors. I've worked as a cab driver and as a waiter — great opportunities to see and meet different kinds of people.

"I've learned to play the trumpet: there's great discipline in that. And I run marathons. Marathon running clears your mind and your psyche and cleans out the poisons in your body. It's a tremendous source of inspiration. I don't want to be an 'Actor.' I want to be other things that I can develop from. I want to be a human being first, and the acting will look after itself."

In the meantime Tony has also been gathering some material for future screenplays he hopes to write, on the humorous incidents of being tall, and keeps a tongue-in-cheek attitude toward directors who try to limit his size.

"I've had people say I'm too tall to be an actor, which is ridiculous. Life is made up of many different kinds of people. But it's a unique thing about me anyway. It makes for good headlines at least, don't you think? 'Tall Actor Struggles in Career.'"

Krystyna Hunt

paul driessen



unexpected endings

Right now he lives and works in The Hague, in a "starving artist's garret" overlooking the sea. One of several foreigners working at the National Film Board, Paul Driessen has gone home for awhile to be closer to his family. He lived and worked in Montreal for five and a half years and for the past two has worked back and forth between Holland and Canada, adding to his already celebrated reputation as an animator with a style and a sense of humour that are unique.

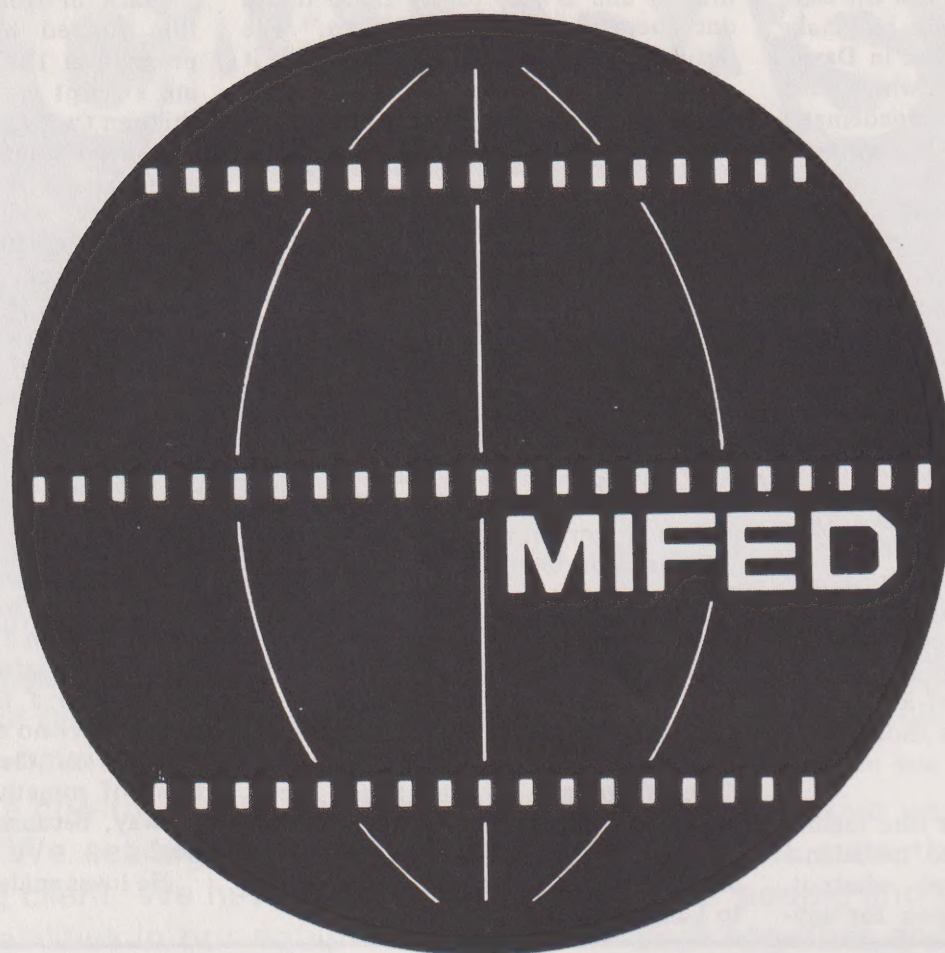
Driessen has been drawing all his life. He began to animate his characters after art school, when, desperate for work and attracted in good part by its idyllic location in the forest, he applied to a studio run by American Jim Hiltz. Hiltz liked his drawings and gave him work, allowing him a free hand in all he did from idea, to design, to final product. His first job was a series of glue commercials for Dutch television.

While at the studio Driessen met George Dunning, a Canadian working in England, and when Hiltz returned Stateside, Driessen, with classically perfect timing, went to England. **Yellow Submarine** had just been slated for production, and next thing you know, he's brainstorming ideas for the script and doing some of the animation. The experience was "loose and easy and brilliant and nice."

Meanwhile, Dunning had let slip the good word about the NFB, so, when offered work on **Tiki Tiki** at Montreal's Potterton Studios, Driessen grabbed it. In his off hours he knocked on the Film Board doors. Presented with his idea and storyboard for **Le bleu perdu**, the French Animation Dept. accepted it. It's a colorful and touching fantasy about an enterprising child with a convenient set of wings stored in his pockets who discovers paradise and blue skies beyond the pollution layer.

After that, he made **Air!**, **Cat's Cradle** (already a classic), and **An Old Box** at the NFB and worked on Potterton's production of Oscar Wilde's **The Happy Prince**, a TV special, directed by Mike Mills.

Among other things, Driessen is noted for his use of off-screen action. In **Cat's Cradle** there is a sequence in which we follow a line as it travels around the



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INTRODUCING...

edge of the screen until at last the camera pulls back and reveals a big snake coiled around the space. And in **David**, his latest completed film — which shared the Grand Prix with Co Hoedeman's **The Sand Castle** at Annecy last spring — the main character is a fellow so small he's invisible. The often blank screen is filled instead with sounds — the effect is rivetting.

"What I like to do is to show something that isn't there perhaps. Or it might be there but in a different faculty somehow, so you don't really know what you're looking at until I show it. To keep an audience attached to the screen so they're looking for something... it means that something's alive."

Because his drawings are indicative rather than explicit — there are many spaces in the lines — animating his films is far more elaborate than cel animation. "It's not less drawing, but more planning... Usually you can get away with half of the drawing. If you shoot every drawing twice you get a sort of fluid image. It works nicely."

Not schooled in film or film technique, and not being used to traditional modes of continuity and whatnot, Driessen is as he says "open for any-

thing", and is free to try those things one theoretically "shouldn't do." The results are consistently refreshing. "If it works, I use it."

There is, in all of his films, an underlying sadness because of the transience of things and a great feeling for the quality of life — the environment; the treatment of children by adults. "I'm concerned about that. It's with me all the time I guess, but it doesn't depress me. But if I can show it in some way, I will."

Driessen has also worked briefly for the CBC, and they want him back. He almost worked for the Canadian Association of Mental Health. They approached him with an idea but rejected his final storyboard because he had altered their idea and it was no longer the family story they wanted. He was firm: "As long as I can choose, I do my films my way."

Happily however, the Film Board liked his story board, and **Le rejeton** (**The Offspring**) — working title — is currently in progress. It is being animated by Martin Langlois. Driessen was in Montreal in August acting as consultant to Langlois on the film.

Back in Holland he's working on a film funded by a municipal cultural program in The Hague. He's also finishing a script for a feature animation for children (with a wider audience in mind of course) which he hopes to coproduce with Canada. With several job offers he may very well be back here come March though nothing is definite as yet.

For Driessen, the content of an animated film is as important as its design. While his drawings are simple — and idiosyncratic — the ideas behind them are very complex, rich in myth, fantasy, and moments of utter madness.

Another of Driessen's trademarks is unexpected endings — sarcastic and somewhat disconcerting. For example: God leering at a centrefold inside the "Big Book" (**Le bleu perdu**). "Usually it's nasty, it's true. I used to tease people a lot when I was in school... Usually I apologized after (I think), which you can't do in a film." But these "cruel twists" have no deep meanings. "It's not my view of the world. It's so easy to think of something like that — for me anyway, because I'm trained." Then he laughs.

He loves spiders too.

Jane Dick

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bear island

fighting the elements



Setting up while there's still some daylight left

by Philip McPhedran

What was it like to crew the most expensive Canadian feature ever made? And to be thousands of miles from home? And to find the ice forming around your mouth and nose as you waited for something to happen? And when it happened, to find out it was not what you were expecting after all? Philip McPhedran put in time with the crew of *Bear Island*.



An icy Donald Sutherland

It's thirty-five degrees below centigrade in Stewart, B.C., and the cast and crew are huddled on the side of a glacier. Supposedly they are there to shoot an avalanche scene for **Bear Island**, a 9.3 million dollar Anglo-Canadian co-production.

But there's one slight problem. A small cloud has stopped on the peak of the mountain and refuses to move. After a five hour set-up, planting the dynamite, using helicopters to drop camera crews and their gear, using bombardiers and snowcats to get to other camera positions, and lining up the five cameras, the shot is called off and re-scheduled for another shooting day.

Unusual? Not on **Bear Island**. Fighting the elements, whether it be snow or wind, this production literally froze its way to completion.

Bear Island was put together by Canadian Peter Snell, who with early funding from the Canadian Film Development Corporation, united Selkirk Holdings of Toronto (\$3.0 mil), Toronto-Dominion Bank (\$1.8 mil), Bank of Montreal (\$1.2) and Columbia, U.K. (\$3.3), to shoot the highest-ever budget Canadian film.

There are certain conditions and allowances in the co-production agreement and **Bear Island** didn't seem to have any problem fulfilling any of them.

Starring Donald Sutherland, Vanessa Redgrave, Christopher Lee, Barbara Parkins, Lloyd Bridges and Richard Widmark, **Bear Island** brings together a well-known cast with a high adventure story written by Alistair MacLean (who has topped 60 million in world-wide sales with his novels).

Sutherland and Parkins represent Canada; Redgrave and Lee, the United Kingdom. Since under the agreement you are allowed two foreign artists, Snell picked up Bridges and Widmark from the United States.

You also can shoot in a third country, so the production spent a month in Glacier Bay, Alaska. The other locations were in Stewart, B.C. and Pinewood Studios in London.

Canadian actors playing major roles in the film include Lawrence Dane, Patricia Collins, Candace O'Connor, Augie Schellenberg and Nicholas Courtland.

Don Sharp, the veteran English director, had already worked with Snell when he directed **Hennessy** for him. Currently playing in London to excellent reviews, is his remake of

The 39 Steps. Sharp also brought you the stunning boat chase through the canals of Amsterdam in **Puppet on a Chain**.

Sharp, David Butler (**Voyage of the Damned**) and Murray Smith collaborated on the script. With MacLean's agreement, they changed the story from one about a film crew, to one about a NATO expedition plagued by strange occurrences while on a mission at Bear Island. Snell explained the change this way, "We liked the story line but felt another film about film-makers would be boring. After all, **Day for Night** really was the definitive movie about filmmaking."

There had been a few doubts expressed about the capabilities of a Canadian crew after some earlier co-production fiascos, but **Bear Island** followed in the footsteps of **Coup d'Etat** (later renamed **Power Play** for all you hockey fans) proving that Canadians rank second to none in filmmaking expertise.

A lot of credit has to go to the west coast IATSE, who under the enlightened leadership of John Bartley showed once again that flexibility and common sense encourage a producer to come to them (unlike their brothers of the East but that's another story).

The original schedule called for 78 days of shooting, with just over a month being spent in Stewart, another month on the Russian cruise ship, the M.S. Lyubov Orlova in Glacier Bay, and finally a month of shooting in the studios at Pinewood. The film lost about five days in Stewart due to weather conditions, and another five for the same reason in Alaska, all



A helicopter giving the crew and gear a hoist

*Philip McPhedran, one of the co-revivers of Cinema Canada, directed the C.B.C. Superspecial Karen Kain: **Ballerina**.*

at an average daily cost of about \$80,000. So it seems the film will eventually come in at around 90 days.

The construction crew arrived mid-September in Stewart, a mining town whose population had dropped from 1200 to 500 earlier that year when Granduc Mines closed shop. **Bear Island** came at just the opportune time. Over the course of shooting, the production employed about 120 locals and poured about \$2 million dollars into the area.

In order to get to the exterior set, which was thirty-two miles from Stewart at Tide Lake (listed in the "Guinness Book of Records" as having had the largest snow accumulation over a winter, approximately 100 feet), the crew had to be bussed for an hour and a half over a very beautiful, but dangerous mining road. Included on the journey were two to three foot cliffs on one side of the very narrow road and a mile long tunnel carved through a mountain. It was just past this tunnel that a fuel tanker, caught in a whiteout, drove directly off a cliff, falling five hundred feet end over end. Fortunately, the driver found three hundred feet from the truck, came out of the crash with a concussion and a few cracked ribs. For sixteen miles of the road, the B.C. Highways supplied convoy leaders who led the production vehicles to the set, reporting in every mile about their progress. With twenty two vehicles, each equipped with radios for safety, and not all of them travelling in the same convoy, organization became very important. Teamsters and locals split the driving between them (the locals with ten years experience on the road taught the teamsters before shooting) and to them it became a common sight when helicopters landed on the road in front of them to offload gear or lunch for main or second unit. The road was kept open twenty-four hours a day by snow control personnel, called Snowbirds. Their leader Robin Mounsey from Stewart, estimated there were sixty possible snow slide paths on the road and that fifteen to twenty of them were quite possibly major in nature. Using 75mm recoilless rifles (fairly big) they would fire twenty pound shells from the road into cornices (overhangs) in order to cause a smaller avalanche than if they let it build up. When they couldn't reach the cornices from the road, one of the Snowbirds would hang by harness from a helicopter (minimum two men on the safety line) and lob a bundle of dynamite, after lighting the fuse, into the cornice. Then the idea was to get the helicopter out of there very quickly.

The first day of shooting gave the production an idea of what to expect — they went to the cover set right away. Then in the second week of shooting, a very unnatural thaw occurred, costing them a couple of days. And finally, a huge overnight snowfall of four feet combining with high winds, closed the road to the set for a couple of days.

Stuart, the first assistant director, faced four options on the morning of a shoot. Depending on weather and road conditions, he had to decide on one of the following: either try and go to Tide Lake for the exterior set, or in the opposite direction to Bear Glacier, or to the Meziadin Highway (another direction) for rig shots (shooting actors from the waist up on the back of a flat bed truck as if they were skiing on snow), or if all else failed to the cover set two miles away from Stewart. Of course, whatever decision he did make affected almost every department.

His assistants didn't have it any easier. Apart from being frozen on a glacier every day, at night they had to make the circuit around Stewart to the crew and cast delivering on average about one hundred and twenty-five call sheets.



A hydrocopter on a scouting mission

Just the mammoth size of the production created problems. At one location, the crew was shooting on a lake situated two miles from the road. Using a helicopter, with gear wrapped in a sling underneath, they brought in heavy equipment, but most had to be brought in on a sled attached to a Bombardier. The helicopter made at least seven return trips bringing in such diverse gear as Hydrocopters (built in Sweden for this terrain but rather ineffectual on Canadian snow), Larvens (like a snow-mobile but the rider wears ski) and finally on its last trip, lunch for the crew. Because of the height of the mountains, the production could only shoot for six hours a day, and in situations like these three to four hours could be used up just getting everybody and everything there. At this particular location, the temperature with wind chill factor dropped to 55 below.

Most of these exterior scenes were not two actors with dialogue. In this section, here are just a few of the special effects and stunts that were done: blow up a Hydrocopter and in the same shot have two stunt men thrown back in the air by the force of the explosion (using nitrogen jet ramps at 1300psi pressure), do a long chase scene ending in a crash between two Hydrocopters and two Larvens; film an avalanche scene with five cameras, and for a break in the monotony, topple a radio mast onto a building and blow up a generator hut. Yes, sometimes they did do some straight dialogue scenes.

To facilitate shooting, two cameras were generally used, with two others and the second-unit camera available for special effect and stunt scenes. Only 300,000 feet of film was budgeted for the production.

With a Panaflex, a PSR, and two pan arris, the assistants were kept quite busy. They had five different ways to heat the cameras. Basically they started with the built-in heaters (not in the pan arris), then used heating blankets, pocket heaters for the lenses, plate heaters, and finally, wire heaters two to seven feet long. All the camera gear was stored overnight in a room with all the windows open to prevent condensation which would cause fogging, but even then they had to cope with twenty degree transitions once they got on location. Problems usually occurred when the lenses were warmer than the camera body or vice versa. Then one or the other had to be cooled to the same temperature.

The cameras were run off alternating current most of the time, which might seem surprising considering the locations, but made a lot of sense since the batteries, despite being kept



Bunking down for the night in the northern calm

in wooden boxes lined with styrofoam and cuddled by heating blankets, would tend to lose their efficiency in thirty to forty degree below temperatures.

The geared panaheads worked better under these conditions than the Worrall, whose exposed tracks would pick up ice chunks and tend to make operating less than smooth. Oh, and apart from the film being fairly brittle in that cold, the legs freezing up all the time, and getting the gear from one spot to another, all the crew had to do was worry about keeping warm.

On some of the fifty below days, crew members had to recognize each other by their eyes. Since they were all wearing balaclavas against the wind and cold, the crew found a new meaning for the word "eye contact." Some basic errors (once you've made them) included putting moisturizer lotion on your face to protect against drying out and having it freeze because it had a water base. The solution to that one is called Vaseline. Another was not knowing you had frostbite until it was too late (isn't that always the way it happens?). The solution: the crew was told to keep an eye on each other (again) for the first signs of fingers dropping off.

Under these conditions, a crew and cast can only go in two directions. Complaints and moaning or a stoic acceptance of the fate that brought them to this freezing hell. In this case, the latter happened which is very understandable because they wouldn't have opened their mouths to complain anyway. After thirty-six days of shooting, the crew and cast boarded the Lyubov Orlova for the next part of their shoot in Alaska (for more details see Sid Adilman's marathon coverage in the *Toronto Star*).

If it sounds as if the filming was tough, you might understand the following anecdote told by Derek Browne, the main camera operator.

"It was the second time we did the avalanche and the sun was shining, but there was a pretty wicked wind. After checking another camera position, I got back to my camera. Sandy (McCallum), my assistant and Dale (Wilson) the clapper loader were there. I pulled out my thermometer, held it away from the wind —twenty-five degrees below; turned it into the wind, thirty-five degrees below. Dale looked at me, "Cold, eh?" What else to say? Suddenly, he started to jump from one foot to the other, chanting KA-O-PEC-TATE as he did so. So there was Sandy, Dale and myself, thumping our feet and arms yelling KA-O-PEC-TATE in unison. Don, Don Sharp the director, who is about two hundred and fifty yards away at his camera position looks over to see this. He watches for a minute, then calls over on his walkie-talkie, "We're about ready, what's

going on over there?" I replied, "Just keeping warm guv', just keeping warm."

And that, my friends, is just one way a freezing film crew, trying to make a multi-million dollar film, kept warm.

Although the preceding article makes it sound like a very difficult shoot, the tragic death of helicopter pilot John Soutar from Stewart, made filmmaking rather insignificant. John, who was working consistently with the second unit, was bringing back six crew members when his helicopter collided with another on the ground.

BEAR ISLAND Technical Credits

Producer	Peter Snell
Director	Don Sharp
Screenplay	David Butler Murray Smith
Associate Producer	Bill Hill
Director of Photography	Alan Hume
Production Supervisor	Brian D. Burgess
Supervising Editor	Eric Boyd Perkins
Production Designer	Harold Pottle
1st Assistant Director	Stuart Freeman
2nd Assistant Director	Don Brough
Continuity	Margaret Hanly
Camera Operators	Derek Browne Cyrus Block
Focus Pullers	Sandy McCallum
Clapper/Loaders	David Geddes Dale Wilson
2nd Unit Co-Directors	John Harris Vic Armstrong
2nd Unit Assistant Director	Alan Simmonds
Continuity 2nd Unit	Penny Hynam
2nd Unit Cameraman	Keith Woods
2nd Unit Focus Puller	Theo Egelseder
2nd Unit Loader	Bruce Ingram
Art Director	Kenneth Ryan
Draughtsman	David Moran
Set Dresser	Denise Exshaw
Construction Manager	Bill Simpson
Property Master	Doug Purdy Brian Ganby
Props Buyer	Peter Young
Wardrobe Consultant	Lynne MacKay
Wardrobe Master	Robert Watts
Make Up Artistes	Wally Schneiderman
Make Up Artistes	Phyllis Newman
Hairdresser	Leila Seppanen
Editor	Tony Lower
Assistant Editor	Geoffrey Brown
2nd Assistant Editor	Jack Harris
Sound Mixer	Brian Simmonds
Sound Assistant	Rob Young
Special Effects Co-Ordinator	Roy Whybrow
Special Effects	John Thomas David Harris
Stunt Co-Ordinator	Vic Armstrong
Hydrocopter Specialist	Leif Johansson
Gaffer	John Bartley
Key Grip	Tim Hogan
Best Boy	Ben Rusi
Dolly Grip	John Brown
Key Grip 2nd Unit	Frank Parker
Best Boy 2nd Unit	Shelley Degen
Snow Control Supervisor	Robin Mounsey
Production Accountant	Arthur Tarry
Assistant Accountant	Jak King Jrn
Production Assistant Secretary	Marilyn Clarke
London Contact	Lesley Keane
Stills Photographer	Alan Zenuck
Unit Publicist	Patricia Johnson

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- Film policy revisions in Quebec as minister of Communications consults industry
- Susan Clark speaks out on Canada's attitude toward the stars
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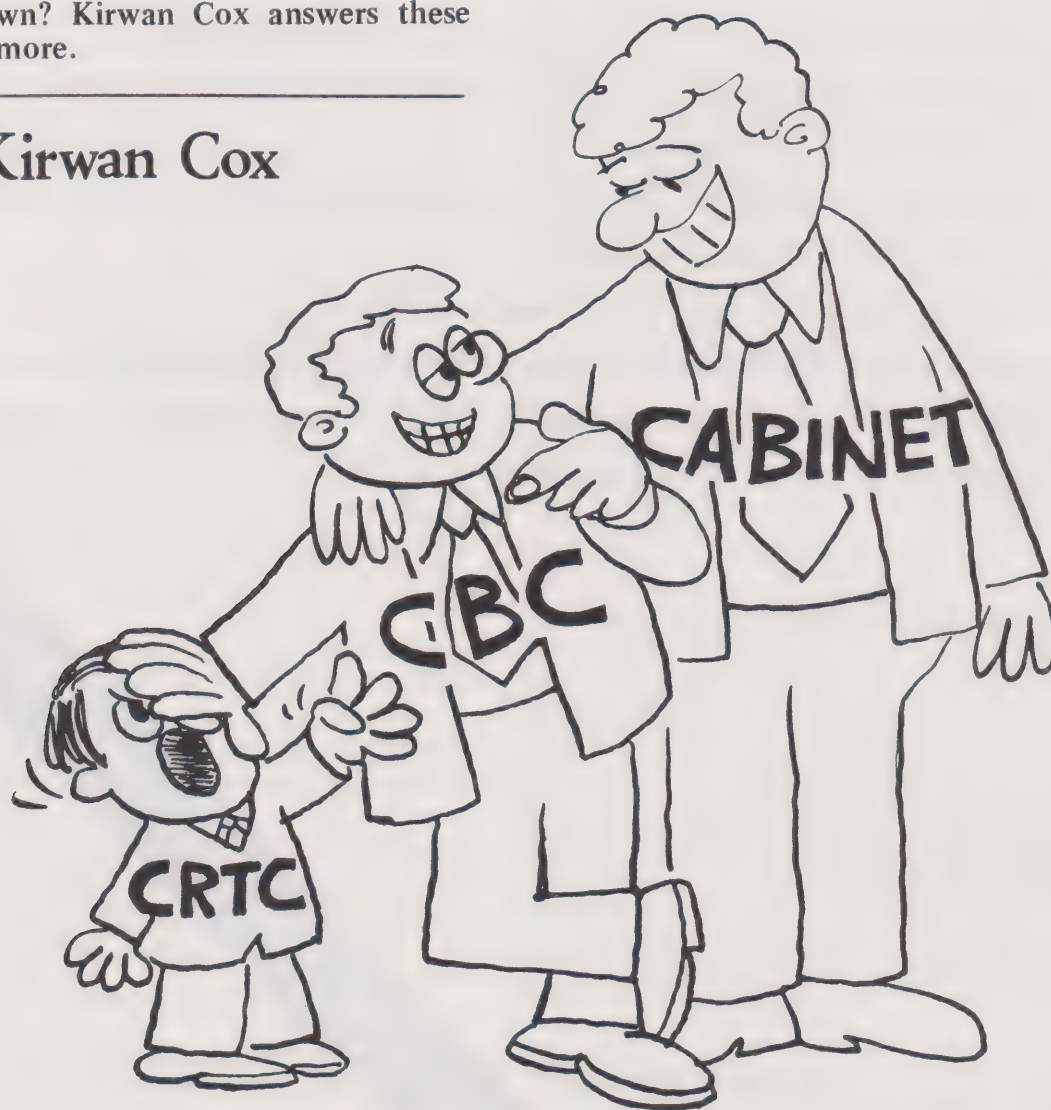
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rearranging the deck chairs on the titanic

cbc-crtc

Is the Canadian broadcasting system hopelessly at sea? Is there any sight of easy solutions to the problem of producing competitive Canadian programming? Is the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation fulfilling its mandate? For that matter, is the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission fulfilling its own? Kirwan Cox answers these questions and many more.

by Kirwan Cox



by Bob Kain

The Canadian broadcasting system is a cultural disaster area — not just because it is a vast wasteland, but because it is an American wasteland. There simply isn't enough money to produce competitive Canadian shows, and thus, 74 percent of English-Canadian viewing time is spent watching foreign programs.

As the Canadian broadcasting system sinks beneath the southern waves, the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), held its public hearing (October 3-13, 1978) to consider the Canadian Broadcasting Company's (CBC) network licence renewals, seem increasingly peripheral.

In the first place, the CRTC has very little real power to turn the system around. The power to terminate a broadcasting licence is the Commission's ultimate weapon. However, they have never used it against a television station even though some private stations such as CJON, St. John's, have deliberately and flagrantly flouted the Canadian content regulations.

The CRTC can't use this ultimate weapon against the CBC since its broadcasting licence is written into the 1968 Broadcasting Act, nor can the CRTC attach conditions to the CBC licence. After the 1974 CBC hearing, Pierre Juneau's Commission attached conditions which would have begun phasing the public service out of television commercials. The CBC refused to accept these conditions and the Cabinet backed it up.

In the second place, what real power the CRTC does possess is being politically circumscribed. The Government has taken two specific measures to limit the CRTC's authority and independence on matters of broadcasting policy. It wrote a new broadcasting act, Bill C-16 (nee C-24), which has not yet been passed. Bill C-16 places all policy-making power in the Minister's hands.

More traditionally, the Government has used the power of appointment to limit the Commission's independence. The obvious example is the premature departure of the strong-willed visionary Harry Boyle, as well as the Government's apparent tendency to use the Commission's seats as a patronage plum for the Party faithful.

A more subtle example of the political limits placed on the CRTC's regulation of the broadcasting system is the \$71 million cutback in the CBC budget announced a few weeks before the hearing. Real power flows from the barrels of the Treasury and with this cut the Government reminded everyone concerned that the public broadcasting service has no financial security.

The August cutback has opened the door to the sublime threat of politically manipulating the CBC through its budget. It also effectively removed any nebulous ability the CRTC had to regulate the Corporation since, without financial security, the CBC cannot make long range promises of performance.

The one power which the CRTC has used somewhat successfully over the years is the power of "moral suasion." It is the power which makes the CBC spend months preparing for the CRTC hearing every fifth year and brings out the

"brief writer" in many people who never submit interventions to other regulators. In fact, the CBC hearing, more than any other single occasion, provides an opportunity to look at the entire broadcasting environment.

This is exactly the strategy CBC President Al Johnson followed with his 52 page opening speech on October 3. He ran down a list of depressing statistics which prove that the Canadian broadcasting system is not meeting the goals of the Broadcasting Act to "safeguard, enrich, and strengthen the cultural, political, social and economic fabric of Canada." He pointed out the main reasons for this problem — namely the cable systems which bring in American channels wholesale and the private television stations which schedule American programs wall-to-wall in prime time. Johnson said, "The cumulative result, over the last decade, has been to make a mockery of the Broadcasting Act."

He added, "It is brutally evident that broadcasters, the cable companies, the CBC — all of us engaged in and responsible for broadcasting — share some of the blame." The inference was unmistakable: the CRTC and the Government are responsible for broadcasting and must share most of the blame. This was very un-mandarin language for a lifelong civil servant and underscored the passion of Johnson's convictions.

Looking at the entire system, Johnson recommended that the prime time, Canadian content quota for private broadcasters be raised from 50 percent to 55 percent and the CBC quota go up to 65 percent. He wanted the cable companies to shoulder part of the financial responsibility for Canadian programming and to be limited to carrying four American channels. Pay-TV decisions should be postponed for five years.

Then dealing specifically with the CBC, he made ten promises, Treasury Board willing. They included bringing the English network up to 80 percent Canadian content in prime time; increasing cooperation between the English and French networks; increasing regional and independent programming; moving the national news into prime time; making the CBC more open and responsive to the public; and proceeding with a second channel delivered by cable.

The impact of Johnson's speech was strong, both in the hearing room at the Chateau Laurier, and across the country via the magic of cable. Thirty-five cable companies with nearly two million subscribers had formed an ad hoc satellite network to bring most of the proceedings to the public.

The cable coverage had the mundane effect of lessening the size of the crowd in the hearing room. Many people attended the hearing by dividing their time between the television set in their hotel room and follow up contacts in the bar. Pleasant, but the sense of "event" in the Chateau was noticeably diminished from the 1974 hearing with its hot, packed crowds.

More importantly, the television coverage meant many CBC employees could see their bosses for the first time answering questions and explaining why things work — or don't work — as they do. The positive impact of Johnson's opening speech was felt by his own staff, boosting morale at a time when *TV Guide* and *Maclean's* cover stories heralded the setting sun of public broadcasting.

Its impact was also felt by the lonely band of public broadcasting advocates which the CBC has carelessly ignored, or treated as enemies, over the last fifteen years. These public

Kirwan Cox is the chairperson of the Council of Canadian Filmmakers and producer of the films Dreamland and Has Anybody Here Seen Canada?



by Bob Kain

enterprise advocates, such as west coast writer Herschel Hardin, have often been the CBC's harshest critics because they want a better, ideal CBC. Therefore, it was significant that Hardin immediately wrote a laudatory piece on Johnson's speech for his *Toronto Star* column.

In fact, with the help of the cable coverage, Johnson's performance may have had the side effect of making him President of the CBC. Up to this point he seemed to play a nebulous role in actually running the Corporation, leaving that job to his top executives with years of broadcasting experience while he remained aloof and out of contact in Fortress Bronson — the CBC's Ottawa redoubt. How he chooses to use his new authority may be the most significant outcome of the hearing.

With the entire spectrum of broadcasting carefully opened up by Al Johnson in his first day address, the stage was set for a spectacular follow through by the Commission: a Socratic debate on the future of Canadian communications by the two organizations most responsible for directing that future. However, to the growing uneasiness of people present, the CRTC questioning fell apart. Some questions had been answered in the voluminous documentation provided by the CBC months earlier; other questions were unanswerably vague; still other questions displayed an ignorance of basic principles of broadcasting; and there was no sense of overall strategy. While Johnson's authority was enhanced at the Hearing, the Commission's authority was undermined by its poor preparation.

As the hearing wore on, the Commission's performance improved noticeably, but the damage was done. Following the Hearing, a sudden spurt of criticism of the CRTC's competence over the past eight years began to surface from an emboldened business community.

Then came 56 intervenors from among 138 briefs submitted. This was a noticeable decline from the 300-odd briefs sent in 1974. Most of the people who spoke represented one organization or another. Perhaps the most enjoyable performance was given by Dr. Alex Grigeroff from Nova Scotia.

He wanted the same amount of news coverage for culture as for sports. His logic was compelling and his sense of humour a relief.

Two of the most significant interventions were made by the CBC's private affiliates and the cable industry. The CBC affiliates depend on ad revenue like any other private broadcaster and, therefore, were against the CBC's goals of further Canadianization and decommercialization of the schedule. They opposed the CBC-2 proposal which they considered a threat to their ad revenue. Their appearance proved that the CBC will never reach its potential as a public broadcaster until the private affiliates are bought out.

The Canadian Cable Television Association agreed that the cable industry was prepared to meet all the objectives of the Broadcasting Act; was prepared to carry additional Canadian services; and was "prepared to contribute to the cost of those services, *provided* we are recognized as a contributing partner rather than a bill collector." In agreeing that cable's millions must support Canadian programming, the CCTA is bowing to the inevitable. Still, its acceptance of this concept is a major step forward. It could mean millions of dollars for the desperately underfinanced production industry *if* the CRTC actively pursues this wedge.

As the days and days of talk at these hearings fade into an amorphous blur, one moment sticks in the memory. Indirectly commenting on the CRTC's responsibility for the problems of Canadian broadcasting, Commissioner Jean-Louis Gagnon pointed out that everywhere the Commission goes it meets "hostility, hostility, hostility — from the newspapers and from Parliament."

Then he asked *the* question: "Can we build a country that Canadians apparently don't want? Do you really believe Mr. Johnson, that the average citizen in this country wants to be a Canadian?"

The president of the CBC answered "yes", but the letters to the editors in newspapers across the country seemed to say that giving up some American television was too high a price to pay to be Canadian.

Claude Jutra, the writer-actor-director-survivor from Quebec, has moved gracefully from French language features to English language films for the CBC. He talks with Paul Kelman and share his opinions on the medium and the message.

by Paul Kelman

jutra on the tube



photos by Lois Siegel

"On T.V. I watch the news. When I say I watch, I mean, I turn on the T.V. set with the intention of watching a given program. I watch the news and once in a while a good old French movie or Hollywood movie. Sunday night is very good for that it you are home and you have nothing to do and if you are not too sleepy."

"... as much as T.V. has a wide audience and reaches a great number of people on all levels of society, it is forgotten. The impact is brief as it is intense."

"I know all my features will end up on T.V. eventually. All films end up on T.V. eventually."



Jutra in action on *The Street* shoot

Award winning Québécois filmmaker, Claude Jutra, has all the intensity and energy resources attributed to a star. At first, Jutra seemed destined to be born, not a star, but a medical doctor like his scientist father. But, not unlike a modern day Molière, Dr. Jutra was drawn to the theatre and eventually to film, where he has been acting, writing and directing for the past thirty years.

At 49, Jutra is very busy working in television, film, and for the first time in two decades, theatre. His performance in his Commedia Del Arte show "Pepperoni" won him critical acclaim in Toronto, not only from the reviewers but also from the theatrical community. One has only to see his fiery

performance on-screen as the priest in *Two Solitudes* to understand his popularity.

Because Jutra is so busy, he has a penchant for time saving devices and general electronic gadgetry. At his Montreal apartment he has everything from an electric notepad to a telephone answering machine that he can operate remotely from anywhere in the world.

In the living room stands a Sony color television set. In this interview, done in Toronto where he was editing a film, Jutra discusses his relationship to television.

Cinema Canada: Was *Ada* your first T.V. film?

Claude Jutra: Film for television, yes. There were a lot of short films that I did for the National Film Board, but they were for both kinds of distribution.

At the beginning of television, there were T.V. series that were Film Board series. There was one obligation... well, there were two. The most objective one was that the length of the film be predetermined to the second. And, all of those on the series were vague documentary themes.

Writer, actor and director, Paul Kelman has been working for the past three years with Toronto's Passe Muraille Theatre. He recently spent several months in Montreal with this company where he collaborated on and acted in their highly successful presentation of "Les Maudits Anglais."

One of these series was **Profiles des Paysages**. Each show was a portrait of a person. In some cases it was a celebrity. But, it could also be the portrait of a humble anonymous peasant somewhere.

Who did you profile?

I did two. One was on Felix Leclerc, who was rising very fast internationally as a singer, composer, and lyricist; and I did another one on an old actor named Fred Barry, who died soon after. This was 1960.

In 1959, you made a short film with French filmmaker, François Truffaut. Was that also for television?

No, that was a 35 minute theatrical short. I did have a project — semi-documentary — where young people did the film that they wanted to see about their generation. The Film Board only gave me a television budget, which meant it had to be shot in 16mm. I convinced them to blow it up to 35mm and turn it into a theatrical short. So what started out as a T.V. film ended up as a motion picture, entitled **Wow!**. I shot in the summer of '68.

How involved were you, then, with television in the early years between the late fifties and the late sixties?

I was never involved with T.V. as such. We were just eager to make films. Whether they ended up on T.V. — we would rather have seen them in theatres. But, if they had to be for T.V., well, it was OK. with us. A lot of Quebec classics were really made for television, in the sense that the budget partly came from Radio Canada (CBC).

Ada, then, was the first film you made specifically for T.V., two and a half years ago. How did you feel about it?

Marvelous. It was a very fine experience. I'm finishing my fourth film now for television with the CBC. All my films for television were made in English and for the CBC.

Have you been approached by other networks to make films for television?

No. Once, a Montreal company approached me. But it didn't work out. Very soon the project failed.

So, CBC is your only outlet for television film?

I can't say that because I'm not looking for such an outlet. It just happened.

If you're not seeking it, what is your relationship to television?

Practically nil. On T.V., I watch the news. When I say I watch, I mean I turn on the T.V. set with the intention of watching a given program. I watch the news and once in a while a good old Hollywood or French movie. Sunday night is very good for that. If you are home and you have nothing to do and if you are not too sleepy.

As a filmmaker, television is not a medium you find exciting to pursue?

I'm much less interested in television than I am in film or in theatre. But, where do you draw the line? Once again it is all based on that.

I like live television a lot more. I've had a few T.V. series of my own, about motion pictures, where I presented films. I have one going now for Radio Quebec. And I know all my

films end up on T.V. eventually. All films end up on T.V. eventually.

When T.V. began, it changed everybody's life and it changed especially the performing artist's life. In '53 when it arrived in Quebec, I was, for example, already in theatre school. I graduated and later went to another theatre school yet I never appeared on the stage till years later. But, you know, where does T.V. start? Where does it end?

The thing about television is it is instant, it is ephemeral. You get quite a bit of feedback immediately after a program. Exposure, instantaneous. But, as much as it has a wide audience and reaches a great number of people on all levels of society, it is forgotten. The impact is as brief as it is intense.

Are you saying that the theatrical film has a longer lasting involvement due, let us say, to its largeness and to the fact that it is an event, as opposed to the television film with its constant commercial interruptions and the on-off switch?

It doesn't have to be like that. But the usual relationship between people and their T.V. sets makes it like that. There is a way of watching T.V. that makes it really equal to going to the movies.

I very seldom turn on the TV. unless I know what is on. I consult the "T.V. Guide." And, if, alone, in a good T.V. room, with a good T.V. set, color, cable, then it is really just as intense an experience as is going to the movie theatre.

How does filming for television compare to filming a theatrical feature?

No difference. I make no concession. I think it is ridiculous to quote, unquote, "shoot for television."

There is no difference in technique?

If I am shooting on film, it is exactly the same. If you are doing a live show or a variety show, then, you have got all



Above, at the dance while, below, the real street people watch the actors





Setting up on St Urbain's St.

those fantastic electronic gadgets, color keying, electronic zoom, reversal of polarity and all those cameras going simultaneously from all angles. Then it is different. But, if you are shooting on film, especially on location, there is no difference.

Aren't you affected by other factors, such as a more limited rehearsal time?

The budget is smaller. It is like doing a low budget movie. The money problem has nothing to do with T.V. T.V. budgets are smaller than some motion picture budgets. But, I don't think for *Ada* or *Dreamspeaker*, the budget differed very much from those which I had to make other films. In the movies we spend a lot more on stock.

There is no difference in directing a performer on film for T.V. or a theatrical short.

None.

What about the often criticized over use of the —

Close-up! Nonsense! I make no difference. I don't give it a thought.

*In *Ada* you were working mostly with stage actors, Ann Anglin, Janet Amos?*

Ann Anglin, Janet Amos, Connie Kaldos, David Fox, Miles Potter, Kay Hawtrey, Sabine Maydell, Jayne Eastwood and of course Kate Reid. Marvelous performers, all of them. For many of these people it was their first film. But if you are working with artists of that calibre, what they have to do to merge theatre with film, they learn in minutes, and it happens.

*The role of *Ada* brought Anne Anglin the nomination for Best Performance along with Donald Sutherland for his portrayal of the title role in CBC's *Bethune*. Sutherland won. Any comment?*

In the Oscars for example, people tend to vote for the films where more is at stake financially and if a film is successful then success breeds success. So, they tend to vote for the popular films.

In Canada those factors don't exist because films don't make a profit anyway. We don't have big stars. We don't have enormous budgets. We don't have to oversell because a product is so huge.

Sutherland is an international artist and star. He was working with Fellini that year. He didn't need the award.

It is for Canadians to appropriate and to keep him here, to say, look this man is a top star and he is Canadian.

Doesn't that discourage the building of a following for the performer working here? Hence, a star-system of our own?

Stardom. It is a youthful dream. Everybody has that dream, more or less when they are young. It is a question of working. Finding things to do that are worthwhile and that you like to do.

My real dream, which I still nurture, would be to make one film a year in Quebec. But, that happens to be impossible. I would very much like to make an American movie these days.

Aren't you considered one of the most well-known film directors from Canada?

I don't want to answer that. I think it is a ridiculous question. There are many well known Quebec directors. Many are known better internationally than I am.

And within the country?

I don't think about it.

We find that odd since there are very few directors who enjoy a popularity with people outside the industry. Particularly in view of the fact that you are also a screen actor.

You see this bag? I just bought it in a junk shop. I paid for it with a credit card and the man said, "Oh, are you *the* Mr. Claude Jutra?" So, I blushed and turned away. But, there he was. I'm always surprised and pleased, to be frank.

But do you think I will evaluate myself against others, as to who has the most points? It is of very little interest. It is like the best seller list or the hit parade. Are you going up? Or are you going down? I make films. I am looking for partners who will help me and provide good scripts and budgets to make films.

I haven't made a feature since 1975. It took me five years to make another film after *A Tout Prendre*.

In terms of what you want to do, is television, then, a bread and butter context?

I never compromise on the content or the nature of what I am doing. I'm just as proud of *Mon Oncle Antoine* as I am of *Dreamspeaker*, as I am of any feature I've made or will make in the future.

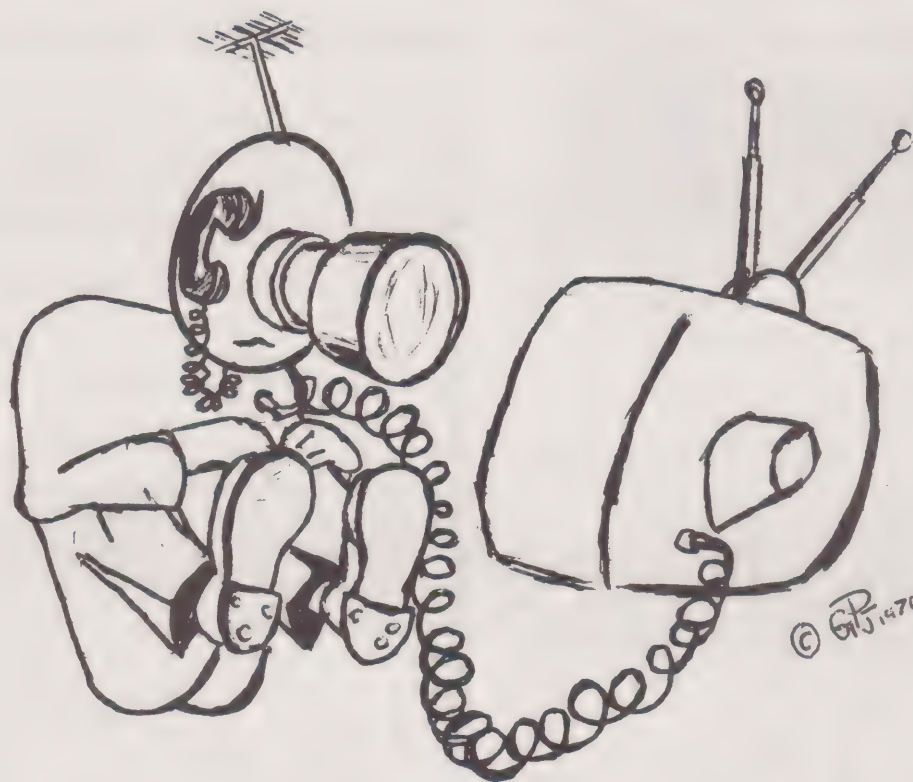
up against the future

or why the issue isn't pay tv

Want to watch yourself partake in *Deep Throat*?
Want to see yourself step out of the latest Eaton's
catalogue? All this and more maybe possible through
the use of Pay-TV and a highly controversial Matrix
Card. Take a futuristic look with G. Philip Jackson.

by Philip Jackson

BIRTH



a tv tube baby

I wanted to write a strictly imaginary story.
It would go like this:
A boy explores the forest area about his cottage. He is not

certain what will happen to him, but he knows that the day
will present him with a number of extraordinary events.
It does.

He finds an abandoned city in the forest. It is a strange city that belonged to the energy-rich past, but was closed, like so many others, as part of the "urban rationalization" programme imposed by the government in the years of adaptation to the real energy crisis.

The boy wanders through the city trying to imagine what it was like when it was populated, in the days when people drove cars.

A large and frightening man emerges onto the street. He is a derelict who lives in the ghost city. He staggers, says he is not well, and begs the boy to help him.

This is the problem. The man looks menacing, and the boy is alone. He hesitates.

The picture of the man freezes. The hypnotic pulse of the set is broken off, allowing the boy to snap out of his super concentrated state. The teacher's image is superimposed on the screen.

"Why are you hesitating?" the teacher asks.

"Because I don't know what the right thing to do is," explains the boy.

"What do you think it is?" asks the teacher.

"I don't know," insists the boy. "He scares me."

"Perhaps you should have considered such a possibility before you chose to go exploring alone," the teacher says.

"You mean I made the mistake at the beginning?" asks the boy.

"What do you think?" replies the teacher.

The story would continue with the boy and the teacher agreeing to try another scenario, the set changes image. The boy has never been to a cottage — not really — most of his waking hours are spent watching himself behave on a screen, in which he controls his actions, but in a world which is drawn from libraries, its images integrated with his choice of actions.

The boy virtually lives within these scenarios where he is penalized or rewarded for making the right or wrong choice.

The boy's choices are adapted to his environment and situation by a complex computer and communications system, the product of the meeting of technologies.

It is, an imaginary story. An expert in computer and communications technology might want to call it "facile."

So I will tell you another story.

I did *not* make it up.

It was told to me by an expert in communications technology.

He advises the government on the future.

He told me that in the future, the future I can expect to live in, I will be able to dial a number on my telephone (by this time it will be unusual to talk to people by telephone) and that this number will, for instance, correspond to the Eaton's catalogue. I will dial the sub-number that corresponds to "men's fashions." The result will be that a video program demonstrating "Men's Fashions" will play on my "television" screen.

That is not remarkable.

What is remarkable is that I will have a card. It is called a "Matrix Card" and it will tell a certain computer what my bodily proportions are, what the shape of my face is, and color of my hair. I insert the card in a device subsidiary to my telephone, and the tape of the mens' fashion begins to play. The computer will correct the proportions and appearance of the model who wore the clothes when the tape was made, to resemble my own. The computer, I am told, will separate the models from the rest of the picture, and use the information from the matrix card to place me there, by way of an ingenious paint-by-number system not unlike the one used to broadcast the image of Jupiter to Earth from the Pioneer 10 spacecraft.

What is happening now, is that I think I see myself on that screen, wearing the latest in men's fashions, moving, turning, smiling.

I don't know a thing about computers.

I was assured that such a technology would just as easily allow me to watch myself partake in Deep Throat.

Quite a thing, that matrix card.

I must in fairness say that the expert from whom I learned these things never claimed to love the system he was envisaging.

I, of course, hurriedly qualified his story saying that for the moment such a system was strictly a speculative thing, noting that developing technologies often evolve to be applied in manners totally unlike what had been foreseen by those closest to their invention.

He agreed, but cautioned me saying that in terms of strict hardware, all the components needed to develop such a system exist. All that remains to be done, he said, is integrate them.

"What would some of these systems to be integrated be?" I asked.

"To begin," he said, "cable television systems with information retrieval systems, Pay TV systems, computerized banking, and the phone system, the full range of telecommunications integrated and accessible to the individual..."

To begin.

So now I think back to this half-hearted controversy over pay-TV. Pay-TV means a lot to us we say, because it is the system which may allow us to assert a degree of cultural independence. It might be our last chance.

But Pay-TV is also something else.

Pay-TV, when it comes, will be the first true thread integrating these technologies, particularly to the extent that it is developed with direct feedback capacities (as we have seen it done experimentally in the States) and with growing information retrieval capacity.

The feedback ability will, as it has been said, bring referendum politics of a new sort into the realm of the possible.

The near 600 channel capacity of fibre optic cables could revolutionize the fundamental financial and organizational premise of the television production and broadcasting business, perhaps — in a few years, that fashion catalogue.

Of course, people know this. They know it in the CRTC, in the telephone company, in government and private information service organizations, in telecommunications and broadcasting.

Which is to say that when you hear Ottawa talking about Pay TV, they're not really concerned with Pay TV itself at all.

I didn't make that up either.

G. Philip Jackson, once of Jackson-Lorrimer Film, heads-up Lightscape and is in production with four films. He is also starting a distribution company for Canadian, experimental short films in Paris.



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liming, feting and fliming

by Kris Paterson

As we find ourselves snowbound at midwinter, many a filmmaker would give his right arm to film down South. Below is a first hand account of a shoot, last winter, in Trinidad.



photo: Paul Michnick

While I wax eloquent about the diverse joys of filming for a month in the Caribbean, during what, I gather, was a singularly unpleasant February in Toronto, a word of caution for those filmmakers who may be considering the warm possibilities of remaking *Mutiny On The Bounty* or *The Endless Summer* because Trinidad has "plenty bureaucracy, mon."

Glossary

"Fliming"	Trinidad dialect for filming
"Liming"	Laying back and having a good time
"Boedecia"	Check your history books
"Bang stick"	A nasty device consisting of an aluminum pole and a live shotgun shell which explodes on severe impact, used to send sharks and other predators to fish heaven.
"Mas"	Ancient Trinidadian word for carnival
"Feting"	From the French for party

This is a "Limey" (British) legacy honed to horrendous heights and, when coupled with the slower lifestyle of the Islands, can drive the speed-crazed North American mind quite mad. Despite our valid work permits, visas and letters of agreement, it took us three days to clear the equipment through customs. All forms are in quintuplicate, totally without meaning for us, and it seemed, for most of the officials who were usually unfamiliar with them and couldn't decide how to fill them in. All this paperwork was processed through Port Of Spain (the capital) twenty miles away, then more signatures were added back at the airport; the paper went back and forth several times to various officials at enormous taxi expense only to find it was siesta-time, or that the official had gone off duty somewhere to watch cricket, another "Limey" legacy. Naturally, he had forgotten to mention the matter to his colleagues. The phone system rarely works, and the fast Trinidadian dialect is impossible to understand anyway while ninety-five degree weather is frying the brain cells. Tempers were getting very uptight and as a result, "Fresco" (who had the best credit rating of the crew) almost blew his top when asked to post a \$25,000.00 (Trinidad and Tobago) bond (about \$11,000.00 Canadian) to free the gear. Nevertheless, apart from a quick bid by one customs official to make us pay rent on our own equipment, we were free and in business.*

Trinidad and Tobago are remarkable, beautiful and probably unique islands. The film was centered around Carnival, but was also to show the "aura" of the island's culture. Trinidad is without a doubt the friendliest and least racially disturbed country that I've worked in. It is made up of 40 percent black, 40 percent East Indian, some Chinese, Portuguese and French, a few descendants of the original Carib and Arawak Indians, and about 1 1/2 percent white, all delightfully mixed up, to the benefit of all. Never have I seen so many beautiful people. Unlike the usual CBC or commercial crew who move around the world from Holiday Inn to Hilton with no

* N.B. This is not Mexico. An out-and-out bribe will not be accepted: one uses lawyers for bribery, or faces summary jail.

surprises, we had the benefit of getting in with the people, living first with the East Indian community in the village of Tuna Puna and then, with the black community in Las Cuevas, a fishing village. These live-in situations made the filming flow, and resulted in some lasting friendships.

Getting around in and out of Port Of Spain is an incredible scene, and worthy of a short film in itself. Any car that has an "H" in its licence plate is considered a cab, and most of the cars have one, so for 50 cents one can go anywhere. It is *the* accepted form of travel. The method used is to point vigorously at your feet. A car will stop, and you pile in with five or six other people, a couple of chickens or ducks and go. There is a constant flow of cars taking on and emptying out, usually right in the middle of the road. Anarchy reigns, and it's a delightful change from law-abiding Toronto. The cars are mostly British models from the "fifties", many times welded, patched, painted and covered with "go-faster" stripes, running lights, TV aerials, interiors of pink plastic with zebra stripes, hub caps like the chariot wheels Boedicia would have used against the Romans, and slogans like "Team Competition Car" which look a little bizarre on an ancient chopped and raked 1953 Austin A 30. The driving style is as ferocious as the decor. The roads are narrow with pot-holes and a single passing or suicide lane in the middle. Here the technique is simply to drive head-on at anything that moves, blasting one's horn repeatedly. It seems to work most of the time, and the losers have created a booming trade for the local body shops and for the mad talents of their brigade of steel sheet and brazing rod repairmen.

"Fresco" and I had the dubious distinction of growing up in the U.K. and learned to drive on the wrong side of the road, so the rent-a-car became our responsibility. Needless to say, we plunged into the fray. Our forty dollar-a-day (US) sadly abused Hillman station wagon with bent wheels was used to confront the oncoming hordes. A cold "Carib" beer between our legs, we drove the winding roads, thinking about a cold Toronto with its safe and boringly drivable highways. (As an afterthought, seatbelts in Trinidad are used to hold extra luggage on.)

The two weeks before Carnival are known as "jump-up time." Almost everyone is making "mas," "feting," "liming," or making costumes (mine was a black "T" shirt with "honky" written on the back), or practising for the steelband competitions. During this period the whole island of Trinidad becomes one big pan band (pan is used to describe the steeldrums of various sizes and shapes) and music becomes a twenty-four hour thing. Big steelbands are something else, upwards of 200 musicians all playing at once — the effect through earphones for the first time is shattering. They can, and do, play anything from "Ghost Riders In The Sky" to Bartok or Stravinsky, but this year the big hit was the Gay Desperadoes' arrangement of "21st Century" which, though based on a calypso beat, goes through so many jazz progressions that it reaches something sublime. We were recording both in stereo and mono. The stereo recording was complete of pieces en-

compassing the whole band, while I moved with "Fresco," picking up individual sync takes right inside the band (this was done to facilitate cutting in sync to the master during editing).

Filming Carnival? What can I say? Imagine being a tiny minority of "WASPS" surrounded by 20,000 costumed Trinidadians in a parade of color that defies description. They're all stoned out happy (yes, it flourishes in Trinidad, in fact, better than Jamaican). You just have to flow with what's happening, drink a case of cold beer and sweat it out in the 100 degrees of heat, exchange gulps of rum, gin, whiskey or whatever, hug and dance with total strangers, be absolutely outrageous, laugh a lot, and try to keep your mind on not running out of tape or film. "Fresco" was into using his 85-300mm zoom lens, which is the ultimate lens for the professional voyeur, and when the spirits moved him — and they moved him a lot — would put on his bush hat labelled D.O.P. and jump into the parade with one of the two Eclair ACL's and boogie with the costumed madness. He was using a variety of two hundred and four hundred foot magazines and a complete set of prime lenses including an Angenieux 9.5 to 57mm zoom and a Canon macro 12-120 zoom with attachments ranging from six-sided prisms to spectra star and center sharp edge soft lenses to create a myriad of special in-camera effects that gives the film an acid-look of the sixties, which is exactly where Carnival '78 is at. As old hippies we felt totally at home — wonderful in fact. Check out the finished film for its psychedelic visions. You won't be disappointed.

After a day's rest we headed north to a fishing village far off the tourist route and quickly got into a life of combined film and "lime." As the carnival costumes are inspired by the island's wild life and flora, we needed shots of fish, birds, and jungle, to make the film a total experience. Jock Brandis had built us the MARK 1 Underwater housing for the ACL from the aluminum remains of two pressure cookers, some heavy glass and lots of welding, and we dived off the reefs, encountering another world. Filming went well for a day and a half until we ran into a pack of large and hungry barracuda. Since gun laws are very strict in Trinidad, I wasn't carrying a "bang stick" so discretion seemed very much better than valour; however, the boat was by this time fifty yards away and a few anxious minutes were shared huddled together trying to read the fishes' collective mind.

Our last trip was further north at an isolated cove and jungle where our friends, the fishermen, shortly had us living *au naturel*, picking coconuts and breadfruit, spear- ing a few fish, surfing, and wandering on the beach. Filming was so perfect with the natural light there that it is hard to believe, unless you see for yourself. The film gives some idea.

It's tough being a film crew, eh?

Postscript:

Leaving Trinidad was worse than arriving: more forms; a plane strike; getting bumped off two flights, courtesy of Trinidadian bureaucracy, during which our baggage and equipment left without us; arriving finally in New York at 3 a.m. and sleeping on the floor in cut-offs and "T" shirts until 7:30 a.m. We arrived in cold Toronto at 9 a.m.

Welcome back to reality, or is it....?

□

Kris Paterson and his partner Bob Fresco run their own film company, Pretty Pictures, and were contracted by G.B.R. Media productions of Toronto to film in Trinidad and Tobago during the Carnival period last year.

autobiographical film

by Kenneth Dancyger



The autobiographical panelist: from left to right, Gerald O'Grady, Maxi Cohen, Jonaš Mekas, John Katz, Jay Ruby, Ed Pincus and Stan Brakhage

relaxed, natural and personally transcendent

Artists have always looked within themselves to discover the truths which nourish their art. So is it any wonder that the film artists of the Me Generation have turned to autobiographical film? The size and quality of the movement were measured recently when the Art Gallery of Ontario presented The Conference on Autobiographical Film in November.

"My friend was dying, he was only 30 years old and I made the film for him, to give him immortality. And I made the film for myself. I couldn't handle his dying, wasting away with liver cancer. I had to immerse myself in the ordinary events of everyday life

banal, undramatic, but normal. It was the only way for me to deal with David's dying. So I made the film *Life and Other Anxieties*."

These words belong to New England filmmaker and teacher Ed Pincus. He was showing his film at a unique event

— The Conference on Autobiographical Film held November 4-5 at Toronto's Art Gallery of Ontario. The film and the filmmaker were part of a six week series on autobiographical film, video, photography, and performance, ongoing into December. The program was unusual,

*Kenneth Dancyger is a lecturer in film at York University and has taught film in the U.S. and Canada since 1968. His film **The Class of '75** won Best First Film at the International Experimental Film Festival in Buffalo, and he has since worked on a number of film projects as director, producer, production manager and scriptwriter.*

striking, boring, vivid, stimulating, the whole gamut.

Autobiographical film proved to be so varied that its definition seemed to expand with each film viewed. **Joe and Maxi** (Joe Gold and Maxi Cohen) is a *cinéma vérité* documentary. Sandy Wilson's **Growing Up in Paradise** is a compilation film, **David Holzman's Diary** (Jim McBride) is a dramatic recreation and **Sincerity I, II, III** (Stan Brakhage) are experimental films. And yet they all relate to the filmmaker in a very personal way. Whether they are about their pasts or their present, the films put the filmmaker and his/her sensations in the film's centre.

On the surface, the autobiographical film would seem to be a natural extension of the 70's narcissism — the decade with its excesses, self-indulgence and pretentiousness; and yet the films I saw moved me in quite a different way. There was a timeless quality to the films and a universal quality.

Jay Ruby, one of the panel-participants in the conference, suggested that we shouldn't be surprised that people make films about themselves. After all, autobiography is a legitimate, long-standing literary and artistic form of expression; Bertrand Russell, Thomas Aquinas, Frank Capra wrote self-portraits: Picasso, Van Gogh, virtually every major painter turned to himself as subject. It is believed that Rembrandt may have painted as many as a hundred self-portraits. And yet no one called these men narcissists. (Although the Freudian theory of creativity might refute the present argument.) Ergo autobiography and film. Filmmakers are the latest in a long tradition to use themselves as subjects.

Ed Pincus added an interesting addendum that literary autobiography is the work of artists in their prime; the work of old men and seldom women. Many of the films shown at the Conference were the works of young filmmakers; film autobiography is less predeter-

mined by tradition and consequently, as a form of expression, it knows no bounds of age, sex, or class.

The Conference and series were the brain-child of John S. Katz, Associate Professor of Film at York University who talked about his own interest in Autobiographical film: "I had been teaching documentary film for twelve years. About seven years ago I became interested in new movements within the documentary film — the women's films associated with feminist issues, alternate cinema, revolutionary films, experimental films — and I began to notice that autobiography, the exploration of the self, of one's family, of one's relationships, one's past, one's present, were increasingly the subject matter for these films. Many autobiographical films are neither purely documentary, nor purely experimental; more often they are offshoots of these two film forms. I was attracted to the attempt by these filmmakers to sidestep the artifice of conventional film; to try to use film to get in touch with the self. And I found that my students were responding powerfully to this exploratory form of filmmaking."

Exploratory indeed. Al Maysles brought footage he and his brother had shot of their mother. Straight workprint, unedited. She is not a Rolling Stone, but there is an honesty and charm about her that is as appealing as a strutting Mick Jagger in **Gimme Shelter**. Somehow the Maysles seem to be able to bring out the showman in all their subjects, even their mother. The idea occurs that perhaps there is a showman in all of us.

The filmmaker Maxi Cohen set out to make a film about getting to know her father developed cancer. And died. cancer. She wanted to draw closer to her remaining parent, but didn't know how. She was a filmmaker and so she turned to her medium to try to get closer to this man who was her father and a stranger. In the midst of filming, her father developed cancer. And dies. How terrifying — and yet out of the experience of the filming came a powerful film about children and parents, the difficulty of communication and, most of all, the idea that life ends. The film is quite a humbling experience.

Another type of experience was the David Rimmer film, **West Coast Movie**. Distant, non-judgmental, and yet strangely hypnotic, this work-in-pro-

gress is a visual log of an island community where Rimmer lives. Black and white, colour, blown-up super-8 — just these fragments of what Rimmer hopes to make into a 40 year diary for the island community.

Not all the filmmakers use the form to the same purpose. Stan Brakhage (**Sincerity I, II, III, Duplicity**) uses it to have a recording of past sensations and feelings, a sensory diary. Jonas Mekas (**Notes for Jerome, In Between**) uses the form to organize his life (I'm not sure what that means either). Bill Reid (**Coming Home**) evidently uses it as a form of therapy, an attempt to conciliate and communicate with his family. And some like Martin Scorsese (**Italian American**) use it as a celebration of their roots — he interviews his parents for forty-five minutes and gives us the menu for his mother's spaghetti sauce.

Perhaps the quintessential, autobiographical filmmaker is Miriam Weinstein who presents us with films about her father, her boyfriend and her wedding. The films, aptly titled **My Father the Doctor, Living with Peter, and We Get Married Twice** are very rough technically, are self-consciously trying to reach for feelings, and are ingenuously charming.

As a reporter-participant, I can tell you that there was something the Autobiographical Film Conference captured beautifully. It is difficult to define. The Conference had none of the excitement of the star-studded Festival of Festivals and none of the attendant nervous hype. This Conference was different from an esoteric academic conference on film: to resort to a cliché, it had soul.

The Autobiographical Film Conference had what the proponents of the Human Potential Movement feel is of utmost importance — "real contact" and "human warmth." Students talked to filmmakers over lunch in the A.G.O. cafeteria. Filmmakers talked to filmmakers. Academics talked to other academics. It was all unusual, relaxed, natural. And I think I understand why.

When a filmmaker makes a film about his grandparents or about her father dying, we, in the audience, can't but respond in as personal a way. They expose, they share, and we respond. It's not the type of sharing one experiences when one sees a theatrical film and is excited or titillated. It is a different experience. It is what's fascinating about autobiographical film.

FILM POST-PRODUCTION ON VIDEOTAPE

From the start of television right after WWII, broadcasters turned to the film industry for program materials, and an enormous new market was created, not only for old feature films, but also for new programs on film, specially made for television. The first problem encountered in reproducing films in the television system was the difference in frame rates. A frame rate of 30 per second had been adopted by television engineers in North America, while the standard motion picture frame rate is 24 per second.

It may seem odd that a television frame rate of 24 per second was not adopted at the start to make that system compatible with motion picture. But there were two main reasons why a different approach was necessary. First of all, television picture monitors and receivers were being operated at much higher brightness levels compared with motion picture projection, and this made the flicker problem worse. Besides, it was desirable for several reasons to drive the television scanning system at the same frequency as the alternating current from electrical power outlets — 60 cycles (Hz) per second in Canada and the USA.

Pictures are produced in the television system by a scanning process. An electron beam in a picture monitor or receiver is driven back and forth across the inner surface of the face of the picture tube, causing a phosphor layer to glow and emit light, varying in brightness as the energy in the electron beam rises and falls. The North American television system has 525 horizontal lines in each frame, divided into two fields. The field consists of all the odd numbered lines, and the second field, all the even lines. As scanning proceeds at the rate of 60 fields per second, the even lines

are traced in between the odd lines on the face of the picture tube, starting at the top, to make up 30 complete frames per second. With the higher field rate, flicker was reduced considerably at the same time.

An ingenious solution was devised to fit the film frame rate into the television scanning rate. Motion picture projectors were modified to pull down the film in what came to be known as the 2-3-2 sequence. By means of an off-centre accelerator in the projector mechanism, a picture frame is held steady in the gate during the scanning of two television fields, and then the next picture frame for the duration of three fields. With this arrangement five television fields are scanned while two film frames are being projected or an average rate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ fields per frame — that is, $2\frac{1}{2} \times 24$ (60).

The Vidicon Tube in Telecine Cameras

The practice was adopted at an early stage of projecting film pictures directly into a television camera in an equipment layout that came to be known as telecine. Setting up two film projectors and a slide projector around an optical multiplexer and the television camera enabled multi-reel feature films to be broadcast without interruption. Cameras for telecine service were fitted with vidicon tubes which turned out to be particularly suited for reproducing films. An interesting — and very useful — characteristic of the vidicon tube is that scanning can continue during periods when the projector shutter is open with no noticeable effects in the resulting television pictures provided that a couple of relatively simple requirements in light application are met.

The vidicon tube is an extremely simple device, consisting of an electron emitter (heated filament) at one end, and a flat face plate at the other end, the inner surface of which is coated with a photoconductive layer. Surrounding the tube in operation are focusing, alignment, and horizontal and vertical deflecting coils to which voltages are applied, driving the beam back and forth over the photoconductive layer, in a fixed pattern of lines, fields and frames.

In 1953 when R.G. Neuhauser of the RCA Tube Dept. described the vidicon at an SMPTE technical conference in New York, he made the comment that "one might well wonder how a tube so small as the vidicon can be made to produce a picture from film equal to or even superior to that from a broadcast quality image orthicon tube." A type of vidicon suitable for use in telecine cameras is 6 in. long and 1 in. in diameter, with the flat face plate at the front end having a useful photo-area of about 9.5 x 13mm. This is only slightly larger than a 16mm motion picture frame.

Inside the tube a sharply focused electron beam sweeps back and forth over the illuminated face plate, and a tiny current measured in fractions of a microampere is generated, varying in relation to the light intensity in the different parts of the image projected on it. In a color camera there are three tubes, and an optical system splitting the projector light beam into red, green and blue components. The outputs of the three tubes are combined to produce color video signals that can be distributed via cables, recorded on videotape or broadcast directly to the public.

Automatic Signal Level Control

The invention of the vidicon telecine led to the development of a method for broadcasting film that had unfortunate consequences for the motion picture industry. With previous methods — for example, with the old iconoscope tube — an operator had to be assigned to telecine camera control to make electronic adjustments to compensate for the erratic behaviour of the tube itself. In contrast, the vidicon gave a much more stable output, with maximum and minimum signal levels almost directly related to the light intensity in the lightest and darkest portions of the film images. The task of the television technician assigned to the operation of a monochrome vidicon telecine was reduced to making adjustments of the camera controls affecting maximum and minimum signal levels, to compensate for film density variations and maintain as nearly as possible uniform peak white and black signal levels at the output.

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One reason for this approach to film reproduction was that the vidicon tube responded to a very wide range of light variations. According to equipment designers at the time, broadcasters were being supplied with films so variable in density that the operators had to deal with changes of 100:1 in films from different sources — that is, the light at the vidicon face plate in picture highlight areas was sometimes 100 times greater from some films than from others. Telecine output could not be allowed to vary to this extent, and a method was devised for controlling the light entering the camera, consisting of a remotely controlled continuously graded neutral density disc in the projector light beam. The telecine operator rotated the disc in the light beam by turning a control knob marked "gain" to keep the peak white signal level at approximately 100 units on the scale attached to the face of a waveform monitor, a special type of oscilloscope used for this purpose. A separate electronic pedestal control was used to keep black levels at approximately zero — slightly under 10 units in some operating modes — on the waveform monitor scale. The standard composite video signal has a total amplitude of 1 volt, including the synchronizing pulses. The waveform scale is divided into two sections by a zero line — 41 units below zero line for sync and 100 units above this line for the picture signal, with a narrow guard band between zero and 10 units for what is known as set-up. Broadcasters always try to maintain signal levels as nearly as possible fill the waveform scale — in this way viewers at home can be given pictures with bright highlights and deep shadows, so necessary for best possible picture quality.

Monitoring signal levels and making occasional adjustments of gain and black level controls proved to be an exceptionally tedious task for television technicians. It was not long before equipment designers found ways to automatically control signal levels — claims were made that the automatic controls not only released technicians for other more interesting work, but at the same time responded more quickly to film density variations, giving a more uniform signal output. Soon, almost every broadcasting station in North America was operating telecines with automatic controls, with little regard for the quality of the pictures obtained from films. When the pictures were poor it was assumed that the film was itself faulty. It should be noted at this point

that the entire North American broadcasting industry, with the exception of the major US television networks, had in the beginning adopted 16mm as the standard television film format.

Proposals for Uniform Highlight and Shadow Densities

The only way out of the deadend that automatic telecine operation imposed, seemed to be to try to persuade filmmakers to pay more attention to controlling highlight and shadow densities and thus cancel out the effects of automatic signal level controls. But at an SMPTE section meeting in Montreal in Oct. 1957, this proposal was given a poor reception. Several in the audience protested that instead of asking filmmakers to change their practices, the television system should be modified to accommodate any film considered to be acceptable in direct projection.

As it has turned out in the meantime the protesters were a lot closer to hitting the nail on the head than they realized, but at that time it was unrealistic to expect any change in the television engineering approach to film reproduction. It was only through a completely unrelated development that a far more promising way was found to achieve a breakthrough.

This development was videotape, invented in the mid-1950's as a means for temporarily storing the signals from live television cameras. Before videotape, all television programs had to be broadcast live — a dreadful strain on both performers and technicians. The announcement by the Ampex Co. of their video-recorder using 2 in. magnetic tape was greeted in television circles with rejoicing, and in short order just about every television station had one, and often several machines. The most astonishing characteristic of the video recorder was that the picture obtained in playback from the tape were almost identical in appearance with the original picture from the live television cameras.

Television Program Production on Videotape

But a far more important consideration than excellent technical quality, as it turned out, was the possibility offered by video recording for producing programs on tape in a manner similar to film editing. Many people outside of the broadcasting stations were attracted by this possibility and production centres were organized to make programs for the broadcasters. One of the most popular — and profitable — activities in

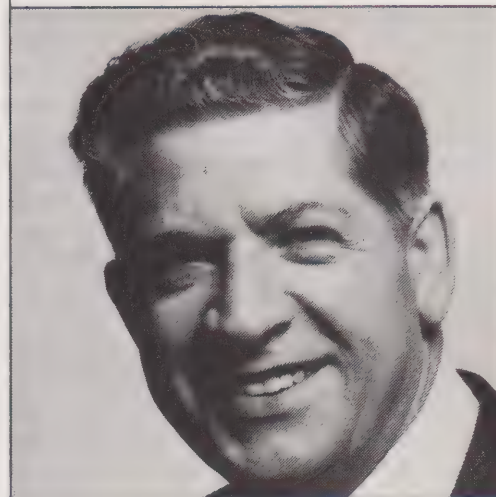
these centres was — and is — the production of television commercials, but many full-length entertainment programs have been made in this way also.

It was only a small step for these production centres to acquire telecine equipment so as to be able to reproduce film footage supplied by, or made for, their clients. Film footage first has to be transferred to videotape to be incorporated into the programs. As the transfers from film to tape are being made, clients are likely to be on hand watching the television pictures as the video signals are being recorded. In this kind of a situation an operator would have to be assigned to make whatever changes in telecine camera controls that may be needed to enhance picture appearance. It is most unlikely any client of a production house would tolerate unattended telecine operation with automated signal level control.

Next in issue no. 54: *Camera-Type Telecines.*

APPOINTMENT

Quinn Labs Mirrophonic Sound Film House



Bill Hambley

We are pleased to announce the appointment of Bill Hambley as Vice-President, Sales and Administration of Quinn Labs, Mirrophonic Sound and Film House for both lab and sound services.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Films of Don Shebib

by Piers Handling

Ottawa: The Canadian Film Institute, 1978, 148 pages, \$5.95.

Richard Leiterman

by Alison Reid and P.M. Evanchuck

Ottawa: The Canadian Film Institute, 1978, 120 pages, \$5.50.

Two years after its publication of Maynard Collins' *Norman McLaren*, the Canadian Film Institute has released volumes two and three in its series on Canadian cinema. The books — Piers Handling's *The Films of Don Shebib* and *Richard Leiterman* by Alison Reid and P.M. Evanchuck — represent the most thorough studies to date of their respective subjects. At the same time, the two works raise questions concerning the roles of the figures discussed and the methodology to be used in the study of the national film experience.

Both books consist of introductory essays followed by lengthy interviews with the filmmakers, excellent filmographies and select bibliographies. In *The Films of Don Shebib*, Handling's auteurist introduction to Shebib's career represents the most systematic pursuit of the subject to appear in print. In rather poetically titled sections, Handling takes up Peter Harcourt's appreciation of the moments of meditation that appear in Shebib's films (see *Cinema Canada* No. 32). He, then, outlines the long string of documentaries to Shebib's four features and his television work. Throughout, Handling maintains an awareness of Shebib's development of a central concern, the "male bond," a subject he discusses in further detail in the third section of the essay. In an appropriately brief section, Handling notes Shebib's depiction of women. And, in concluding sections, he discusses the nature of the closed worlds in which the plots of Shebib's films are enacted and, also, the question of where Shebib's long string of loser protagonists fit in a larger Canadian milieu.

Seth Feldman teaches film at the University of Western Ontario and, with Joyce Nelson, has edited the Canadian Film Reader. Also, he is president of the Film Studies Association of Canada.

Handling is honest enough to conclude that it "is difficult to evaluate the importance of an artist in a broader context, particularly when that person is still active and obviously will continue to make films for a good many years to come." *Goin' Down the Road*, we are told has already guaranteed Shebib a place in the history of Canadian cinema. "Hopefully," writes Handling, "the promise that this film held out will mature and evolve, or more specifically, be *allowed* to develop (Handling's italics)."

One wonders. Granted Shebib's work may qualify him as one of the few consistently productive directors outside of Quebec. But is there really evidence that Shebib's films continue to be a central influence in Canadian film production? Or does the nostalgia that pervades these films work its way into our assessment of them? And, if Shebib does indeed "mature and evolve" will this evolution be in a direction relevant to the increasingly sophisticated Canadian film audiences?

In his interview with Handling, Shebib himself provides the basis for a long overdue reevaluation. From his boundless dedication to classic Hollywood cinema to his overt flirtation with fascism, Shebib goes out of his way to define himself as an embarrassment to Canadian film culture. He not only dislikes almost every Canadian film discussed, but he seems to bemoan the very presence of others directors in this country. Shebib does little to contradict his widely publicized criticism of Canadian screen writers. Applying his ideas to Canadian film production, Shebib advocates the creation of large centralized studio facilities in Toronto and Montreal. Then, in a semi-rational passage, he equates any opponents of the idea with Croatia terrorists, Maritime separatists and all the individual and independent parties whom Hitler so rightfully despised.

To be fair, Shebib is not entirely pleased with his own work. He admits that the difficult circumstances under which he has worked — including the inadequacy of so many of his collaborators — have weakened his productions. He tells us that he cannot get the hang of working with actors, a tangential skill whose lack makes him look less talented than he is. And, when all is said and done, Shebib admits that despite his

radio reviews, he, himself, is not a critic. But then, after his description of the Toronto media, who would want to be?

To be really fair, it may be suggested that Shebib was not at his best during the hours that Handling spoke to him. Perhaps Handling probed too many nerves. Or, to be more generous, perhaps Shebib's answers were meant as provocations, put-ons designed to elicit support for the many victims of his attacks.

Generosity aside, the self-portrait revealed in this interview is that of a minor Howard Hawks who believes it would be all for the best if someone were to provide him with the facilities to develop his persona. And who are we to refuse him? Who would argue that it took a Hawks — or, more accurately, a Hawksian hero — to make feature films in this country years ago? If Shebib were *allowed* more regular feature production, he could be counted upon to bring forth the qualities of toughness and the moments of grace that may be found in his work to date. These are not small accomplishments. Yet one is left to wonder, amid the growing variety and accomplishments of English Canadian film, whether this Los Angeles world view will not occupy a shrinking niche in our consciousness. And, if we are to take Shebib's assessments and his politics at face value, we may wonder if his works will become tid-bits of the national cinema that are increasingly difficult to swallow.

The Shebib book, also, calls into question the concept of an auteurist approach to English Canadian cinema. As Handling's disclaimer implies, any director with a dozen or so years of experience and a bare handful of features under his belt, is at a disadvantage when scrutinized as if he were an established master. This is not to say that source material, critical essays, interviews, even collections of reviews are irrelevant. This sort of material — amply provided by the CFI's previous pamphlet series — is still far too sparse. But is there not a more profitable way to use limited resources to cover the subject?

Part of the answer to this is the Richard Leiterman book. The CFI's recognition of Leiterman as a central figure in the genesis of English Canadian, feature filmmaking marks the beginning of an alternative approach. The thorough research done by Reid and Evanchuck

goes far to argue for the validity of the study. Although their introductory essay is shorter than Handling's, it covers the range of Leiterman's work, while presenting a sophisticated discussion of his camera technique. In both their essay and the interview, the authors are highly conscious of Leiterman's interaction with directors such as King, Shebib, Fruet, Markowitz and Wieland. As a result, we get both new information and a new perspective on the production of major films from *A Married Couple to The Far Shore*.

In the interview, Leiterman presents himself as a quietly creative professional, as eager to discuss the concepts behind his work as he is to recount his widely varying shoots. Like Shebib, he is impatient with a lack of professionalism in some of his collaborators. Unlike Shebib, he acknowledges the talent he has found and, parenthetically, notes that he was just as happy that Shebib left him alone during the shooting of *Between Friends*.

If there is anything bothersome about the interview, it is Leiterman's conclusion that he would not like to find himself a 50 year old cameraman. The statement is a sad commentary on the lack of appreciation that he has been shown for his consistently superb craftsmanship. An equally sad commentary is the difficulty Reid and Evan-chuck had in compiling the filmography. It is as if no one ever thought it worthwhile to keep records of a cameraman's career.

It may be hoped that future volumes in the CFI's series will expand upon the ingenuity of exploring Canadian cinema through the perspective of figures other than our nascent auteurs. Possibilities that come to mind are: a group study of the Unit B producer/directors (Daly, Koenig, Kroiter, Low); a volume on the Canadian avant-garde; an overview of the Canadian docu-drama; television features; political film, etc. Beyond this, the most important work to be done in English-language, film criticism is that of providing access to Quebec cinema. If the CFI series must, for some reason, continue to focus on individuals, the individuals it should be focusing upon are people of the calibre of Lefebvre, Carle and Jutra. An even more useful service would be to begin the process of translating the discussion of cinema in Quebec as found in the first issue of *Découpage* to the present. It would be a formidable undertaking, requiring, no

doubt, several carefully edited volumes. Yet the end product would not only change our understanding of the majority of this nation's films, but would also serve as a model for coming to terms with the problematical unities of the English Canadian, cinematic endeavour.

Seth Feldman

Embattled Shadows

by Peter Morris

Toronto: McGill-Queen's Press, 1978, 352 pages, cloth \$21.95, paper \$10.95.

Long overdue but well worth the wait, English Canada at last has its own history of filmmaking to 1939. Peter Morris' *Embattled Shadows* is a pioneering work in its field and will be useful to both Canadian film students and the general reader. The historical questions it raises also create a necessary perspective on the debate over the preservation and expansion of the Canadian film industry.

Embattled Shadows ambitiously tries to cover nearly a half-century of struggle, success, and failure in Canadian film. Thankfully, it does not fall back upon cheap sentimentality nor does it appeal to xenophobic nationalism to explain struggle and failure. Not surprisingly, we discover that success in film, infrequent as it was, seemed to be linked to the Canadian natural environment and its decisive effect on the individual. In the early years, this naturalism seemed to offer the world its window on Canada. The young nation, however, was wrestling with a British colonial tradition which militated against a specific Canadian identity. And simultaneous attempt to digest a population bulge of some two million immigrants between 1900 and 1914 did little to instill a sense of national place or self.

The fundamental question which Morris probes throughout is why Canada never centralized a monopolistic structure in its film industry. The answer, he implies, lies probably more in what Canada did *not* have than in what it did have. It lacked home markets and dense clusters of population. Also, in

the absence of a theatrical tradition, it failed to keep sufficient talent in Canada to make a viable industry. Then, significantly, there were problems in attracting sufficient capital to finance production. Add the final burden of inaccessibility to foreign, i.e., American, markets and one is left with a conclusion Morris reluctantly describes as, "a pretty cogent case for not attempting production in the first place."

Morris traces the history of Canadian film by relying heavily upon two trade publications, *Canadian Moving Picture Digest* and *Moving Picture Worlds*. They are at once the strength and the weakness of the book, for while they provide for a chronological narrative, they may have prevented the author from opening the structure to allow for a wider interpretation. For example, one wishes for a more substantial analysis of Canadian propaganda films in the First World War. The role of Max Aitken (later Lord Beaverbrook) on behalf of the Canadian Government would have been a fascinating story, especially his connection with propaganda newsreels. Such newsreels were typified by a combattant's style that encouraged a heavy-handed and racist characterization of the enemy along with battle sequences that were staged to glorify war.

Even a comment on Canada's *Victory Loan 1918*, a film tag available for viewing from the National Film Archives, could have led to a more detailed discussion of the war propaganda film during this century's first world war. (The film tag shows a Canadian nurse dying a heroic death as her hospital is destroyed "under the merciless bombs of the Hun.") Thus, the author might have argued that the 1919 film treatment of the Red Scare in Canada, *The Great Shadow*, fits into a specific tradition of film propaganda generated by the Great War. Its abuse of communion and its vilification of Bolsheviks, in general, nodect a natural successor to the Hun-hating propaganda which preceeded it.

Gary Evans lives and teaches in Montreal and has written about the documentary film in Canada.

In his treatment of why Canadian production failed to perpetuate itself, Morris demonstrates that Canada's production in the twenties faltered because of a tendency of promoters to "skim the cream" off of the production companies. Such unscrupulous practices by individuals with get-rich-quick mentalities played no small role in discouraging Canadian investment. To this dismal picture was added the spectre of Hollywood's giants, well along in their bid for complete vertical integration, squeezing out the independents, with only 75 percent of all films at this time reaching the screen.

The author wonders why the Canadian Government failed to become involved in private film production, especially since they were anxious to promote trade and tourism in their official films. Was it, he asks, Government's refusal to support the existence of anything outside their own bureaucratic circles or a sense that there was already sufficient private enterprise in the film industry which determined their policy? There is a simple historical explanation which may answer his question. Traditionally, Canadian Governments have not considered it legitimate to compete with private capital or to show profits, but to use state enterprise to facilitate the investment of further capital, often foreign, in the private sphere. Thus, it was not proper for Government to do more than to provide moral encouragement for private film production. Perhaps reluctant Canadian capitalists, having learned a costly lesson at the hands of unprincipled promoters, cannot be blamed for avoiding high risk enterprise like commercial film.

Morris quotes part of a revealing letter from Ray Peck of the Government Motion Picture Bureau which explains why the Government encouraged establishment of a Hollywood branch plant here in the thirties. A brief explanation of the Paramount/Famous Players stock manipulation deal of the early thirties would have sharpened the overall focus of this section, along with a description of blind, block and advance booking abuses. Still, the evidence remains indisputable: Canada preferred to continue its long-established role as a colonial pawn.

This is not to understate how mediocrity dogged Canadian film production in the interwar year. Morris touches an important point when discussing Canadian encouragement of a derivative Hollywood style; the quality of the films offered little that would earn them the chance for distribution or acclaim. One Canada began seeing itself as it was, rather than as a carbon copy of America, something began to jell. *Nanook of the North*, *The Silent Enemy* and *The Viking* revealed a self image which made Canadians curious about their relationship to their environment and survival. Thus the author correctly identifies the documentary and the documentary-drama as the "quintessential Canadian film form." His claim, however, that Robert Flaherty's approach seems more relevant to Canadian film than John Grierson's direct influence on Canadian documentary is most contentious. While he notes that Flaherty portrayed primitive traditions, and the former majesty and character of peoples whose lives were being changed by the intrusion of modern civilization, he seems to ignore the fact that it was a way of life which no longer existed. The romantic exotica of Flaherty's approach had little relevance to Grierson's indelible documentary stamp and his ability to interpret workaday Canada, its shirtsleeves rolled up, to itself and to the world. Such was the British tradition Grierson would transplant in structuring the National Film Board of Canada. But that story begins in 1939 where this book ends.

Significantly, Morris has broken ground in a rich new area of study and has provided the framework from which to build an understanding of this important aspect of Canadian social history.

Embattled Shadows was preceded by the ever popular NFB/CBC production, *Dreamland*. The book puts much needed flesh on the skeleton of that film. Its concluding assertion that it is to the documentary tradition that the Canadian film industry must look in the future seems fair enough. Few could deny that it has been primarily through documentary that Canadians have discovered and held steady the mirror they use to define themselves.

Gary Evans

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FILM REVIEWS

Daryl Duke's THE SILENT PARTNER

d. Daryl Duke, sc. Curtis Lee Hanson, ph. Billy Williams, bsc. ed. George Appleby, cfe, sd. David Lee, m. Oscar Peterson, l.p. Elliott Gould, Christopher Plummer, Susannah York, Céline Lomez, John Candy, exec. p. Garth H. Drabinsky, p. Joel B. Michaels, Stephen Young, p.c. Silent Partner Film Production Ltd (1977), col. 35mm, running time 102 minutes.



Christopher Plummer as Santa, director Daryl Duke and Elliot Gould

Sometimes the film world plays nasty, and sometimes pleasureable tricks on those of us who by necessity or inclination write about it. A reviewer may find himself at loose ends one evening and walk into a movie house to see a film he has had no advance information on and be pleasantly surprised to discover a delightful gem all by himself. At other times, one can look forward to a new film, savoring the glowing accounts of its virtues by respected colleagues and come away reeling with the disappointment of shattered expectations.

The latter example is unfortunately the case with **The Silent Partner**, which despite a successful box office and the accolade of receiving six Etrogs, was unsatisfactory and disappointing.

The story involves a bank heist which is turned around when the would-be victim, Miles Cullen played by Elliott Gould, becomes aware of the impending robbery and on impulse prepares to turn it to his own advantage. Gould gives a credible performance as the milque-toastish bank teller who seizes the once in a lifetime opportunity to break out from the set pattern of his narrowly defined world of cheque cashing and gold-fish feeding. However, Gould is forced to work with a script that gives him nothing to say or do beyond "B" movie clichés, though he is not the only victim. Christopher Plummer, as the psy-

chopathic bank robber, Harry Reikle, is forced to bear his own burden of hammed phrases that are supposed to suggest malevolence, but result only in making the character seem mealy-mouthed.

The story line comes from a suspense novel **Think of A Number** by Anders Bodelson which screenwriter Curtis Hanson optioned, reworked into a screenplay, and showed to producers Stephen Young and Joel Michaels, who in turn brought it to executive producer Garth Drabinsky.

The idea of a man confronted with a crisis point in his life, who opts for a radical departure from the norm, could have resulted in an intriguing character study which, in the context of **The Silent Partner**, should have grown into an intricate cat and mouse game between Cullen, who discovers unsuspected resources in himself and the psychopathic Reikle, who seeks revenge for being stymied in his plans. This is the point at which Hanson and director Daryl Duke have let us down, by turning the material into simple melodrama with its hollow dialogue and its failure to provide proper motivation for the characters, as they move through the film.

All this is more than somewhat surprising since Duke's previous directorial efforts, most notably the film **Payday**,

have dealt quite sensitively with characters who undergo personal crises. But the script for **The Silent Partner** defeats him, and he seems unable to conjure up a real tension between Plummer and Gould which would have lifted the material into art. Instead Cullen is forced to muddle along, reacting without conviction to Reikle's scheming in a moral vacuum where no one bothers to reflect on what they are doing.

In fact, the film descends into a mean spiritedness when the hero's (rather, protagonist's) bumbblings lead to an ending that affirms the grubbiness of everyone concerned. The bank teller is in no way better than the murderer, and the sympathies that have been forced from us throughout the film all cry false. Even the love interest is not sustained and leaves a bad taste in the mouth.

The delightful Celine Lomez who more than anyone injects some vitality into the film is summarily dispatched, with nary a tear shed by Miles, who, one thought, had formed a strong attachment to her. No regrets, only expedience governs the film and Plummer's character no longer seems as macabre when we compare him to Miles whose reactions and new found strengths seem to exist outside of morality.

And can we ever forgive the director for the cheap and gratuitous way in which he dispatched the lovely Ms.

Lomez in one of the film's lower moments? This scene, with its distinct lack of subtlety, pretends to terror, but ends by being merely an inferior substitute — gross excess.

Susannah York is largely wasted as a bank manager's mistress who is attracted to Miles as he becomes increasingly obsessed with outwitting the killer who torments him. The inadequacies of the script prevent York from being a fleshed-out character, as it does the other principal actors, and we are never sure what she wants from the relationship with Miles. The ending, where Miles has finally outwitted the robber and escaped from the bank, is unsatisfying because in this world devoid of ethics and morality, we doubt the bond that exists between the characters played by York and Gould. Are we witness to the triumph of love over adversity or the beginning of another con?

Minor characters such as those played by Gail Dahms and John Candy are wasted in superfluous roles because again the writer has not been inspired to create the density of background detail, though to say, "Look there's Canada in needs."

One other false note, or rather an observation, that is disturbing about the film (although *The Silent Partner* has had successful runs all across Canada) is that Canadian films are becoming distressingly militant in their Canadianism.

In *The Silent Partner*, we are told in no uncertain terms that we are watching a Canadian film (in fact, a Toronto film) by means of lingering pans over one downtown shopping mall recognizable to Torontonians as well as by the odd way in which the CN Tower appears in the background of so many shots as though to say "Look there's Canada in the background!" Such trifling with the audience's interest (the voyeuristic tendency to say, "Hey, I stood in that same spot where Elliott Gould is walking") has a way of backfiring because, while recognizing the Eaton Centre and the "First Bank of Toronto" may elicit a murmur of approval from Toronto audiences, it'll leave the boys and girls in Moose Jaw or Montreal pretty cold.

Most American films that rely on a sense of place have the grace to do a

quick pan of (say) the New York skyline during the opening credits and then forget about the locale for the rest of the film unless it plays an important part in the development of the plot. *The Silent Partner* doesn't need the allusions to Toronto because Toronto is meaningless to the story. Thus to see Canada written in such a way all over the film strikes one as cheap and naive and ultimately pointless outside the immediate community.

The Silent Partner is a forgettable film that delivers much less than its potential given the people involved in its making. What is irritating is that somewhere along the line, too many wrong decisions were allowed to creep into a production that could have been a Grade A thriller in the Hitchcockian vein. This irritates because one can see dimly that inside this turkey of a film, there are the bones of a damn good story.

Günter Ott



Talk about conspicuous consumption! A victim of the Bronswik TV

SHORT FILM REVIEWS

L'AFFAIRE BRONSWIK

d. Robert Awad, André Leduc, sc. Awad, Leduc, animation Awad, Leduc, and Jean-Michel Labrousse, ph. Richard Moras, Jacques Avoine, Raymond Dumas, Simon Leblanc, electronic sd. Alain Clavier, ed. Awad, mixing. Michel Descombes assisted by Adrian Croll, sd. ed and music. Gilles Quintal assisted by Rita N. Roy, music advisor. Karl du Plessis, Don Douglas, narrator. Michel Mongeau, voices. Jacques Beaulieu, Claire Bourbonnais, p. René Jodin, p.c. National Film Board of Canada, 1976, col. 16mm, running time. 23 min, 24 sec. dist. NFB.

Talk about subliminal seduction. It almost seems inevitable that when a man without a car buys dozens of tires, when a woman who detests dogs stocks up on cases of dog food, or when countless other such tales of excessive consumerism come to light — well, these days, sophisticated suspicion would probably lead us straight to out television sets. Alas, we were not so wise in 1964. Not, at least, according to writer/directors Robert Awad and André Leduc, whose delightfully tongue-in-cheek "docudrama" traces the development of the Bronswik Affair from its roots to its culmination, leaving no stone unturned and brilliantly parodying the documentary genre as it goes.

The premise that multinational corporations would conspire to short-circuit the consumer's ability to resist

televised sales pitches is far from outlandish. And it is certainly plausible that the inventor of a particular line of TVs could be bribed by those same corporations to include such a short-circuiting "device" in his design. It is on this credible foundation that **L'Affaire Bronswick** builds its case, "documenting" the histories of unfortunate consumers whose psyches were invaded by waves from their Bronswick television sets. Indeed, the credibility factor accounts for much of the film's success and a good deal of its wit; what we are ultimately laughing at are the seductive powers of both the medium and the format. The topical nature of subliminal advertising has been beautifully exploited here, but so has the documentary genre. Interviews with victims of the conspiracy are shot and performed with absolute fidelity to the mimicked style, and the narrative track perfectly replicates the doomsday voice so essential to this type of "report." But the broadest swipe has been taken at those inimitable "reconstruction-of-event" sequences that are all too familiar; here, Monty Python-like animation has been substituted for live action, and with lovely results. Awad and Leduc, together with Jean-Michel Labrosse have created a moving collage of photographs that are as delightful as they are informative. Attention to detail is immaculate: arrows and instant replay help indicate precisely how several dozen bottles of salad oil tumbled from a victim's hands onto the floor one story below, to graphically illustrate the story or both the victim herself and the janitor, who narrowly missed decapitation by Mazola. An added assortment of official-looking charts and graphs give the animation a wonderfully silly legitimacy.

A return to "straight" satire is made near the end of the film, through a series of "public service commercials" supposedly aired by the government to assure a fearful public that the Bronswick Affair has been brought under control. Just how television stylistics have been beautifully captured is nowhere better illustrated than here: the ads feature (among others) a hockey player skating up to the camera to announce that "L'affaire Bronswick; c'est

reglé!," and there's no better proof that these filmmakers know their target.

It is the accuracy of the send-up that accounts for its impact, because there is relatively little (outside of the animation) to separate it from "legitimate" documentary. It seems as though "look-like" parodies have come into new popularity now, what with television's "Saturday Night Live" specializing in takeoffs on TV advertisements and such. But these spoofs are a golden opportunity for the viewer to reflect upon what one sees and what one believes. The swaying power of format is extraordinary and is certainly borne out by the National Film Board's experience with **L'Affaire Bronswick**. It appears that more than a few people were scandalized that such a story had not surfaced before '78 and demanded to know why they had not previously heard of the "conspiracy."

L'Affaire Bronswick is first and foremost delightful entertainment, but another quality may be attributed to it. Its affectionate "nose-thumbing" of familiar forms may make us more sensitive to our gullibility and warier of our tendency to believe what we see because it "looks right." If lessons continue to come in such delicious packages, the learning process won't be hard at all.

Barbara Samuels

DUNMOVIN

d. James B. Kelly, C.S.C., sc. James B. Kelly, ph. Florence Van Voast, Shirley Van Voast, Alexander Kelly, James B. Kelly, ed. James B. Kelly, sd. ed. Len Abbott, sd. rec. James B. Kelly, p. James B. Kelly, p.c. Mountain, Giraffe Films in Motion, Ltd., Toronto, col. black & white 16mm, 1970, running time 58 min. dist. James B. Kelly, C.S.C., 1 Brule Terrace, Toronto, M6S 1M2.

"For some years now the activity of the artist in our society has been

trending more toward the function of the ecologist: one who deals with environmental relationships. Ecology is defined as the totality or pattern of relations between organisms and their environment. Thus, the act of creation for the new artist is not so much the invention of new objects as the revelation of previously unrecognized relationships between existing phenomena, both physical and metaphysical."

— Gene Youngblood, "Expanded Cinema"

Of the many functions of cinema, it is perhaps the "ecological" function as described by Youngblood which comes closest to characterizing **Dunmovin**, the very personal film recently completed by Jim Kelly. The work is an exploration of both linear and cyclical time, memory, and the recurring patterns within the fabric of life. It is also an examination of personal engagement with history, a revelation of the ways in which the lives of ordinary people are intricately connected with the larger workings of historical change. In the filmmaker's words, **Dunmovin** explores "the underside of history."

Appropriately, the film sustains several emotional levels during its hour's duration; at times it is splendidly quiet and low-key, then filled with exuberant energy. Its subjects are the filmmaker's grand-parents: their daily rituals, surroundings, their memories which span the century. Kelly wanted the film to "grow out of their rhythms" and at the same time preserve some sense of his relationship to them. Yet he was also concerned to challenge his own theoretical constructs about filmmaking. In this sense, the project breaks new ground for Kelly, who has been involved with nearly 200 films throughout his career, which includes his work as cinematographer in such recent feature-films as **Outrageous** and **Power Play**. Here, he purposely works against the grain of cinematic spectacle, as well as challenging the conventions of the traditional documentary. Fascinated by film's complex relationship to reality and time, Kelly explores these areas through a self-reflexive style appropriate to such a personal film. One of its most intriguing aspects is the use of inter-titles combined with simultaneous voice-over readings, a technique which paradoxical-

ly creates both a sense of intimacy with the audience through direct address, and a sense of distancing the audience from engagement within a flow of narrative. The complex blending of intimacy and dispassionate analysis is the tension within *Dunmovin*, creating slightly disturbing variations of pace and mood that give a fine edge to the experience of viewing the film.



Shirley and Zeal Van Voast: 1908

There are several recurring themes and motifs within *Dunmovin*, including that referred to by the title itself: motion and stasis. The orchestration of moving and still camera-work, and life-death symbologies, subtly conveys a tone of urgency underlying the surface level of ordinary rhythms and patterns explored, an urgency connected with the inexorable passing of time. It is as though the filmmaker's exploration of the familial, cyclic nature of time cannot avoid the knowledge that time is also linear, and all things must pass. This urgency is carefully echoed in the filmmaker's own self-questioning about his role, his intervening presence, his somehow arbitrary selection of what to shoot and how, his concerns about "getting a performance" or not being able to convey the feel of this milieu or these unique individuals. Like a variation on a theme, these concerns are again echoed by the revelation of Kelly's great-grand-

mother's photographic interests and role in preserving local history through this medium. At times *Dunmovin* becomes a celebration or "homage" to photographic reproduction itself, including a film-within-the-film and hundreds of old stills from the great-grand-mother's work. This attention to photographic reproduction is a perceptive and intriguing irony in a film addressed to and made "for you children yet unborn, and for yours." It is an irony which Kelly elaborates and plays with throughout the film, and it is, for me, one of the most interesting elements in the work.

The larger historical framework referred to in the film is the influence of the railroad on society, which we see reflected in microcosm in the lives of this family. A train is a lovely metaphor for the passage of linear time, and Kelly uses it in this way, associating changes in the larger community because of the rise and decline of the railway, with the familial rhythms of birth, growth, maturation, and old age. "I longed to make a film expressing personal concerns to specific, knowable people. I wanted to deal with ordinariness privately," says Kelly. *Dunmovin* has already been shown at the Art Gallery of Ontario as part of a series of "autobiographical" films. It's a work which reminds us of the beauty and pain in family history, and of the possibilities for using film as a tool of personal revelation.

Joyce Nelson

PAINTING WITH LIGHT

d. David Leach, ph. Philip Eavns Shaw, Robin Miller, ed. David Leach, m. Robert Armes, Kit Johnson, Narr. Robert Jerkyll, stained glass: Robert Jerkyll, p. David Leach, p.c. Black Elk Films, Toronto, (year) 1978, running time 14 minutes, 35 seconds, dist. Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre, Available in both French & English version.

David Leach's *Painting with Light* celebrates the art and craftsmanship of stained glass making, and the stained glass artist, through the works and personage of Robert Jerkyll. The opening image of a whimsical profile of a face in one of Jerkyll's stained glass designs slowly filling with light, encapsulates Jerkyll's philosophy of using the art of stained glass to manipulate light, a natural source of energy.

What is unique in Leach's *Painting with Light* is that the film circumvents the typical problems that arise when defining a three dimensional artform within a two dimensional medium. The film never falls prey to flattening out the artform, nor does it overwhelm the audience with continuous flashes of brightly colored finished products. Instead, Leach's film is a muted celebration of both the process and the product, a sensitive and highly sensory exploration into the textures of light, sound and colored glass.

By shooting extreme closeups and by layering images through a conscious arrangement of depth and space, Leach successfully explores the sense of touch as well as of sight and sound. Extreme closeups of sheets of slightly opaque colored glass with its air bubbles and imperfections or, for example, one outstanding soft image of fire, molten lead and glass mingling together, allows one to differentiate between and almost feel the various textures, colors, solids and liquids. One wants to reach out and touch the oozing, newly formed lead and the thick treacle used to cement the glass together.

Not only does the film explore the textures of glass, but of sound as well. The music fills and cements the cracks between the artist's voiceover and the silences. The percussive music blends with the rhythms, sounds and scraping of the craftsman cutting glass; the guitars and flute add the element of light to the glass and energy to the film.

Leach bridges the distance between the viewer and the finished product of a beautiful work of art, by demystifying and clarifying the process of the art of stained glass making, thus inviting one to participate in every layer of creation, from the workroom where



Robert Jekyll assembling his panel "Homage to Soleri"

one chooses the sheets of textured glass and colors, to the conception of the design, and to the final technical craft of completing the work of art.

The film itself is structured in a style fitting the process of the art it describes. It begins bound within an almost classic documentary tradition of the narrative voiceover explaining that 'the workroom is where the art begins,' and yet it gradually develops on a freer, more personal level. One feels the freedom of the colors and of the inspired designs through the images of the stained glass bursting in a quick even rhythm. Linear camera movements follow the lines in the design. The skeletal architectural designs and plans are animated and clothed through a series of superimposed images of the various stages of the final work of art. As the finished stained glass design quickly takes form through the rhythmic fashioning of an expert familiar with his craft, so the images in the film are tightly edited towards the end; one is left with the same satisfaction of a well crafted work of art.

Of all textures and layers explored and developed in the film, the most important is that of light and shadow and its effect on colored glass. The artist begins by holding up the glass against a blank grey/white sky, and slowly throughout the film the glass constantly changes as the light varies through different times of the day and different seasons. The world moving

behind the glass becomes an integral part of the textures and colors of the work of art, humanized, as Jekyll explains, through the glass, much the same as it is through the lens of a camera. Life is shown meshing with art, breaking one's image of art as works to behold; the film instead invites participation as it emphasizes the accessibility of the artform by revealing the process.

Painting with Light reflects the excitement and imperfections of an editor cutting a tight fourteen or so minute film that is never boring yet may sometimes too quickly cut away from a beautiful image. This Canadian filmmaker has the sense to make the film available in both French and English; the film is being distributed by the Canadian Film Makers Distribution Centre.

Florence Jacobowitz

OUR CULTURAL FABRIC

d. Kit Hood, sc. Soo Millar, ph. Bob New, Carl Harvey, ed. David Leach, Stephen Withrow, sd. Andy McBrearty, p. Linda Schuyler, p.c. Playing With Time Inc., (year) 1978, col. 16mm, running time 27 minutes, dist. Playing With Time Inc.

Over the past decade a wealth of material has emerged which has as its central focus cultural signs and symbols and their ideological role in society. However named, whether called semiology or cultural studies, works such as Roland Barthes' "Mythologies" or John Berger's book and film series "Ways of Seeing," have provided excellent examples of the kind of analysis possible for considering everyday social phenomena and their relationships with cultural perceptions. It is within the frame of such semiological endeavours that the film **Our Cultural Fabric** should be assessed, since it has set for itself the goal of "exploring the relationship of clothing with cultural and racial stereotyping" (to quote from its publicity folder). Yet, there is a striking naiveté about the film, as though its makers were unaware either of the historical precedents within their own line of attitudinal and cultural interrogation or of the inner workings of their own cinematic project.

"The way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe," says John Berger. Since this is clearly the territory within which **Our Cultural Fabric** is operating, the film should withstand scrutiny on the same grounds. Produced for the Canadian Council of Christians and Jews, and partially funded by governmental sources, **Our Cultural Fabric** was obviously intended to be a film which demystifies "foreign" styles of dress in order to enhance our understanding of cultural mores and differences. Clearly, this kind of film can contribute to easing tensions within a country embodying such a multi-racial and multi-cultural mix as does Canada. However, this project's brilliant potential is fulfilled only in tiny moments throughout the film. We see an East Indian explaining the cultural and religious significance behind the wearing of a turban and we watch the process by which he puts it on. Two interviews with Black Canadians reveal the social and, in the case of the Rastafarian, the religious significance of wearing their hair unstraightened and natural. East European immigrants discuss the clothing of their original homelands and the ridicule they have received

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cinema canada



photo from Canadian Pacific Archives



High hopes in Our Cultural Fabric

ed when so attired in Canada, while the filmmakers reveal through the juxtaposition of magazine stills and live models the way in which high-fashion has co-opted "peasant" styles of dress. As well, the filmmakers interviewed a professor of anthropology who is able to explain the symbolic and practical rationales behind a wide variety of dresscodes. There are moments of subtle humour, irony and even bitterness which emerge throughout **Our Cultural Fabric**, as well as the few fascinating explanations of cultural customs like those mentioned earlier. But such moments are kept short, oddly enough. Instead, the filmmakers have structured their film around a bizarre intrusion which, for me, reveals their own unacknowledged perceptual bias.

Intending **Our Cultural Fabric** for the youth market, to be used in high schools and other educational settings such as churches, libraries and synagogues, the filmmakers shaped their material around the device of an intentionally obnoxious game-show panel which indulges in snide cultural slurs, inane babble and aimless energy. Evidently, the filmmakers felt that only by alluding to the glittering schlock of most television culture could their film appeal to this particular age group — an assumption which itself is simply another form of stereotyping. Even

more problematic, the inter-cutting of this panel with the other material creates, at times, the obviously unintended effect of crudely "commenting" on a previous interviewee. For instance, an immigrant discussing his native attire is punctuated, through editing, by the shriek of the game-show whistle, which serves to unintentionally send-up his remarks.

It seems to me that the filmmakers may have been confronted by the prevalent fear of boring a teenage audience. Not trusting the strength of their original subject to fascinate any age group, they undercut it through using a device — the game-show panel — which actually comes to occupy the privileged place in the film in terms of screen time allotted, verbal dominance, visual energy, and in being the editing "peg." The resulting emphasis in the film is given over to scenes and remarks which are prejudicial in nature.

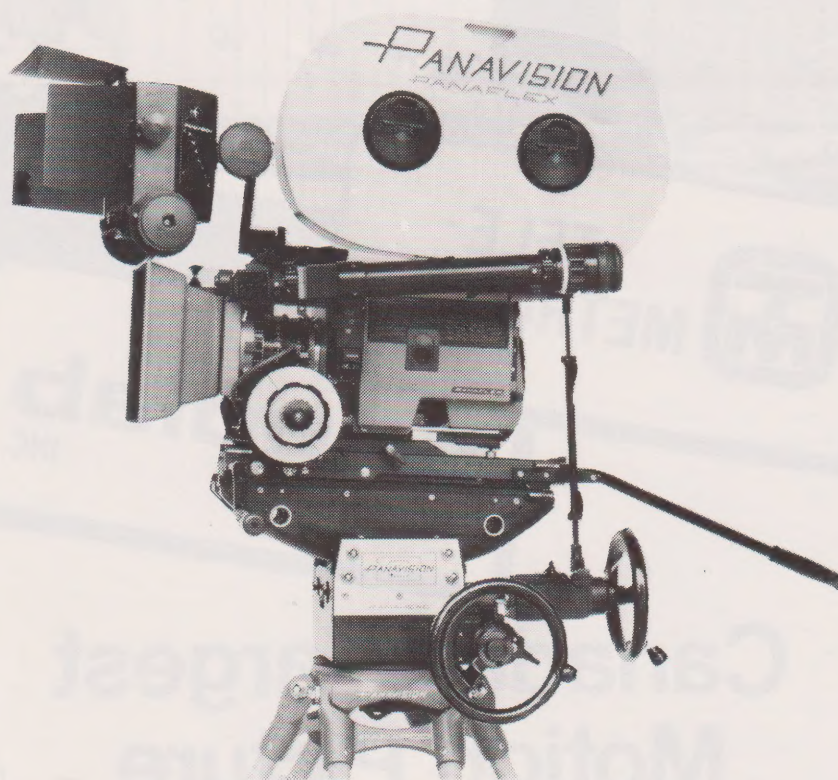
Our Cultural Fabric is only the first in a series of films exploring cultural differences and intended for a youthful audience. If the filmmakers trust in the strength of their original idea, as well as in their audience's sincere interest in learning about cultural differences, they will no doubt turn this into a fascinating series.

Joyce Nelson

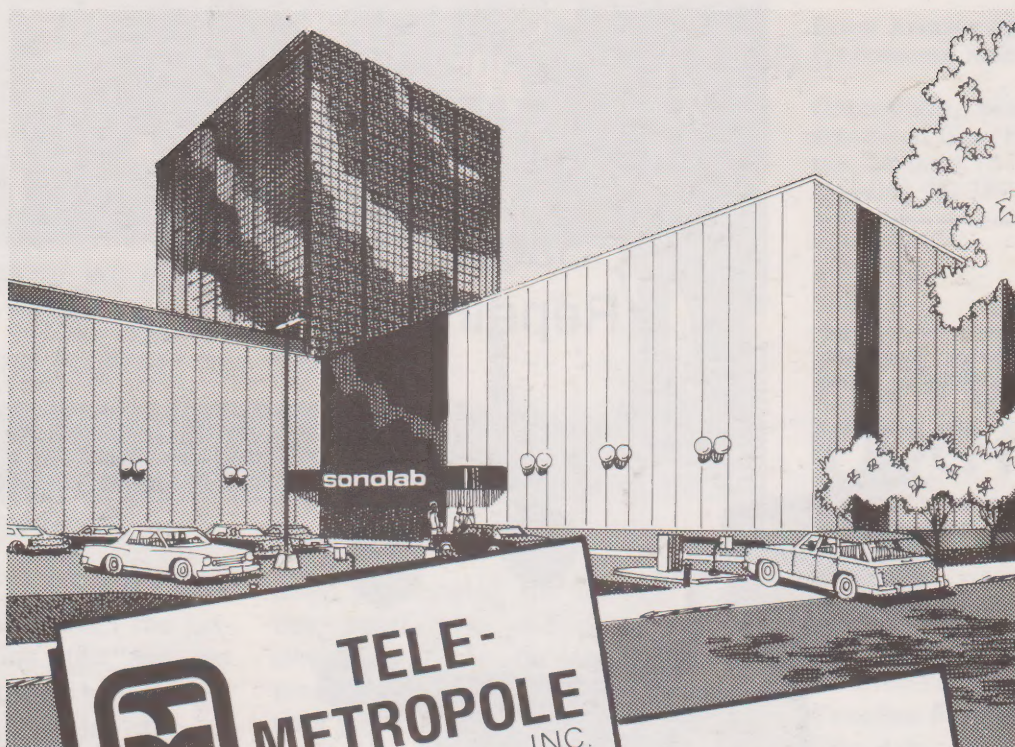
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